ACTION COMICS

土竜

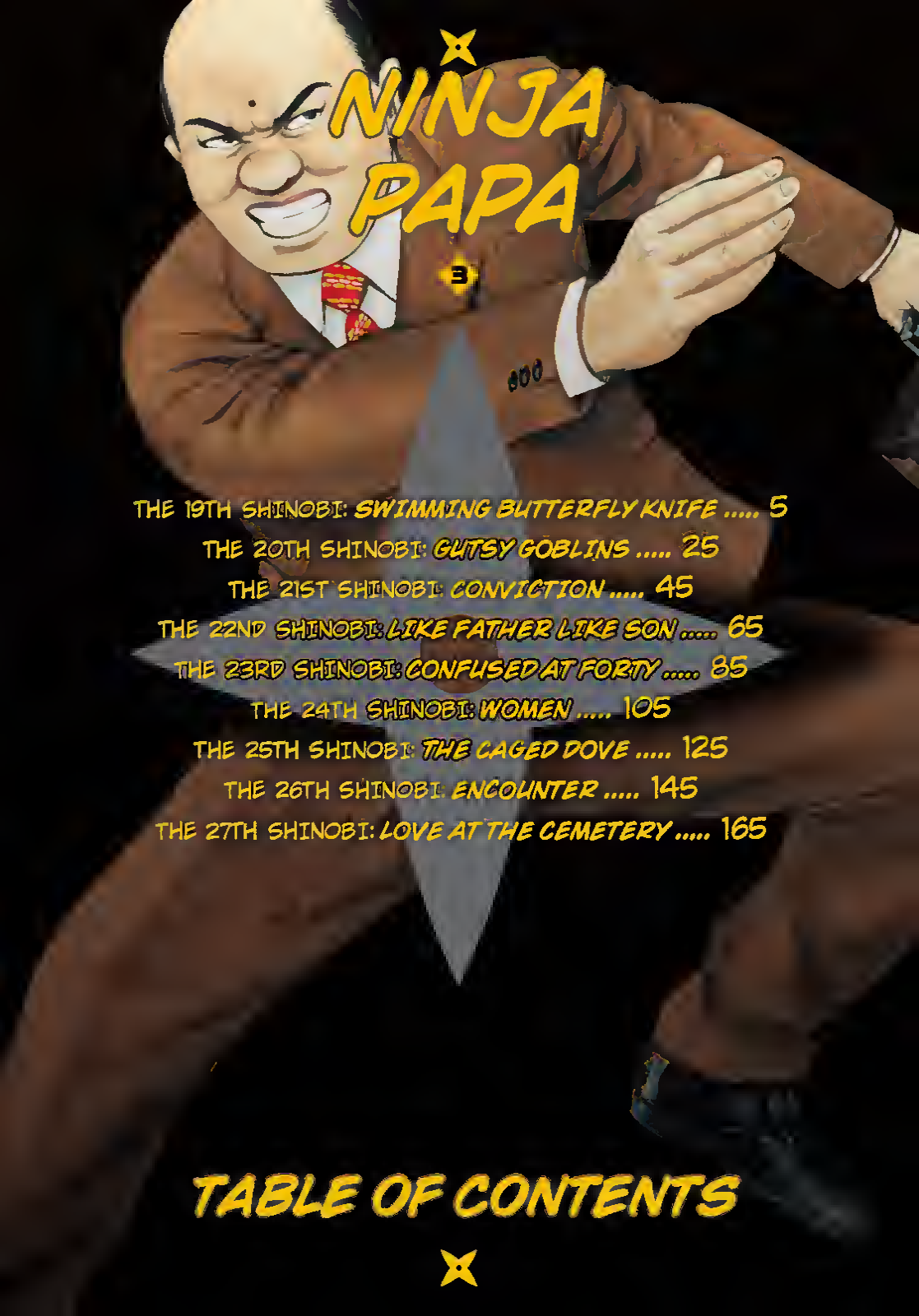
山本康人

3

双葉社

忍者パパ
山本康人
YASUHITO YAMAMOTO
NINJA PAPA
3

桃栗銀行
中田ビル



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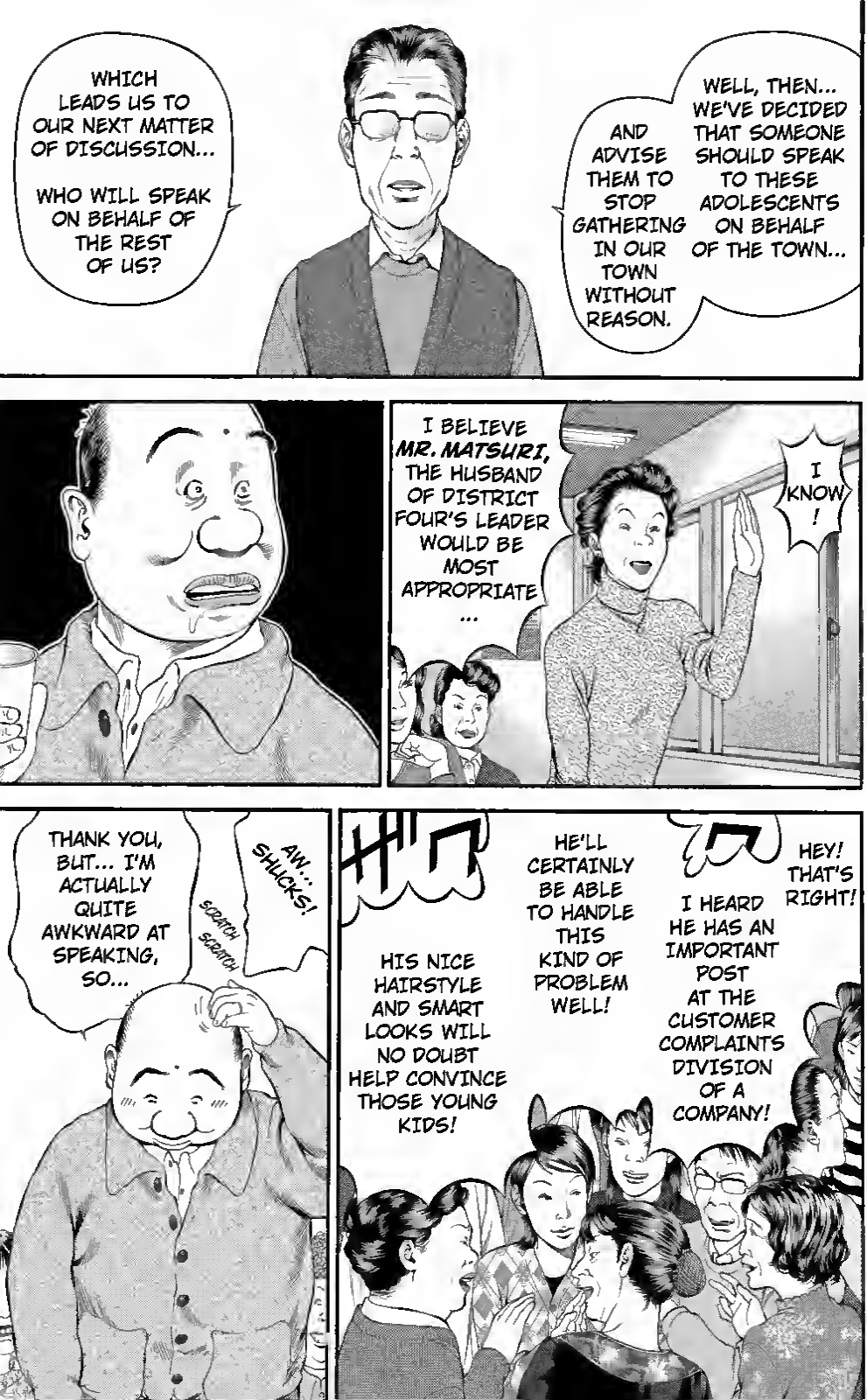
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING
Keep our town clean and green!
SOMEONE THREW AWAY LEFTOVER FOOD IN FRONT OF OUR HOUSE.

SOMEONE SPRAYED GRAFFITI ALL OVER OUR FENCE!
THERE WAS AN EMPTY BEER CAN IN MY BICYCLE'S BASKET!
OUR HOUSE, TOO!

THEY'RE COMING FROM THE NEXT TOWN OVER, YOU KNOW!
THEY'VE BEEN HANGING AROUND OUR HOUSE RECENTLY!
THOSE YOUNG HOOLIGANS ARE THE ONES TO BLAME!

THE 19TH SHINOBI:
"SWIMMING BUTTERFLY KNIFE"

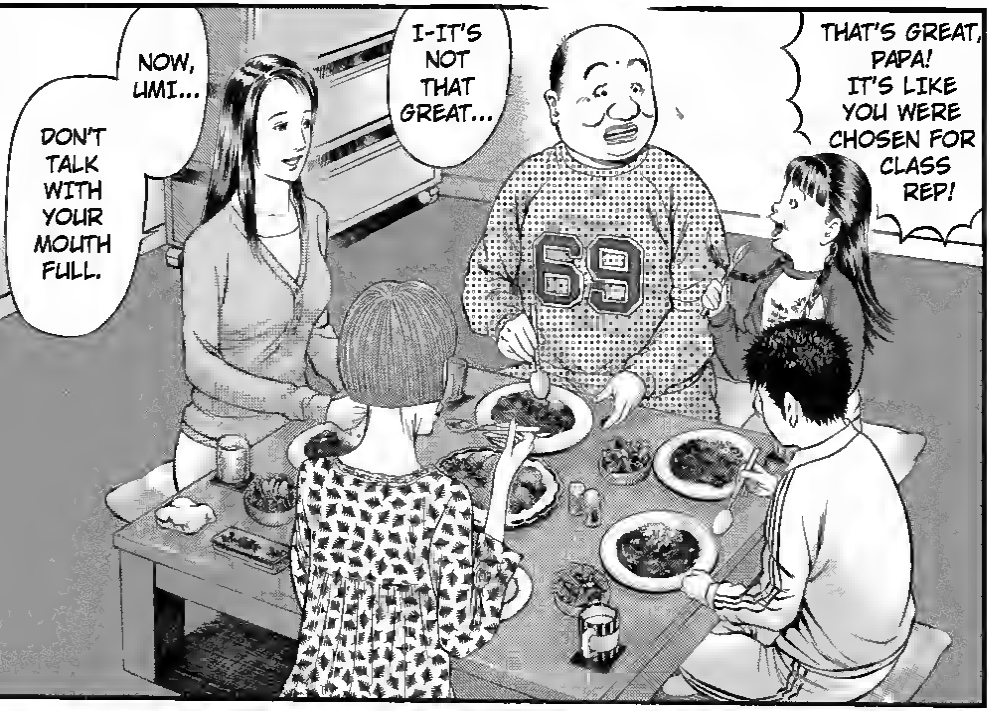

WHICH LEADS US TO OUR NEXT MATTER OF DISCUSSION...
WHO WILL SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE REST OF US?
WELL, THEN... WE'VE DECIDED THAT SOMEONE SHOULD SPEAK TO THESE ADOLESCENTS ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN...
AND ADVISE THEM TO STOP GATHERING IN OUR TOWN WITHOUT REASON.
I BELIEVE MR. MATSURI, THE HUSBAND OF DISTRICT FOUR'S LEADER WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE ...
I KNOW!
THANK YOU, BUT... I'M ACTUALLY QUITE AWKWARD AT SPEAKING, SO...
SCRATCH SCRATCH
AW... SHUCKS!
HIS NICE HAIRSTYLE AND SMART LOOKS WILL NO DOUBT HELP CONVINCE THOSE YOUNG KIDS!
HE'LL CERTAINLY BE ABLE TO HANDLE THIS KIND OF PROBLEM WELL!
I HEARD HE HAS AN IMPORTANT POST AT THE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS DIVISION OF A COMPANY!
HEY! THAT'S RIGHT!

MR. MATSURI SEEMS FAR MORE RELIABLE THAN MY HUSBAND!!
MR. MATSURI!!
MR. MATSURI!!
!
I VOTE MR. MATSURI !!

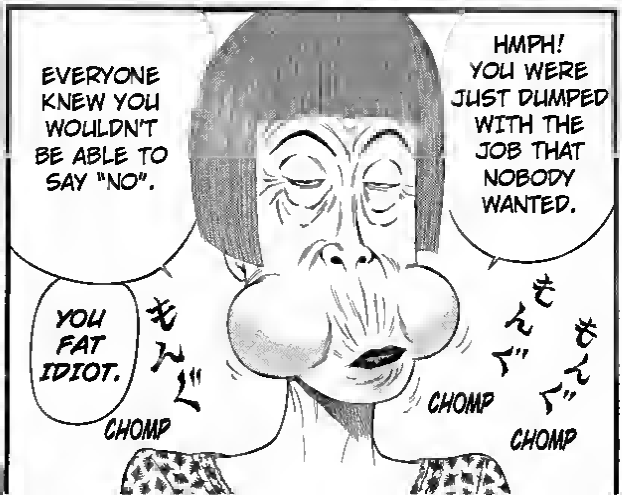
CLAP
ERR...
IT'S DECIDED, THEN... BY A MAJORITY VOTE, THE TOWN REPRESENTATIVE WILL BE MR. MATSURI!

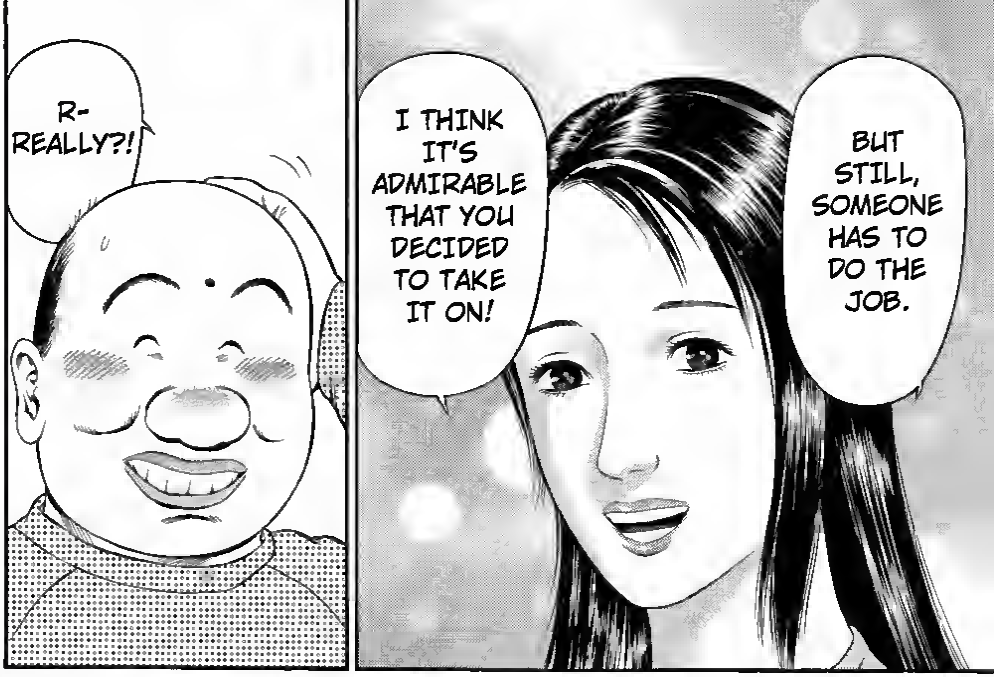
SO THEY PICKED YOU...
MATSURI

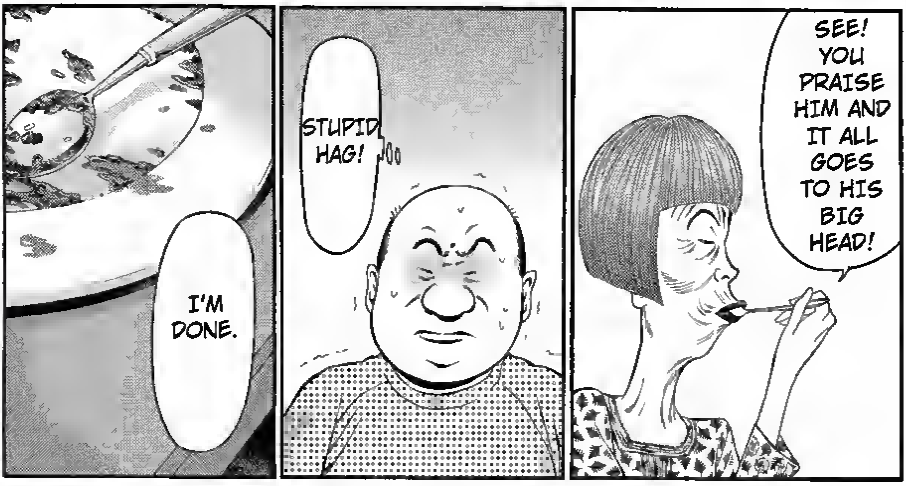
I HOPE IT'LL BE ALRIGHT ...
THAT'S A REALLY BIG JOB, HONEY...

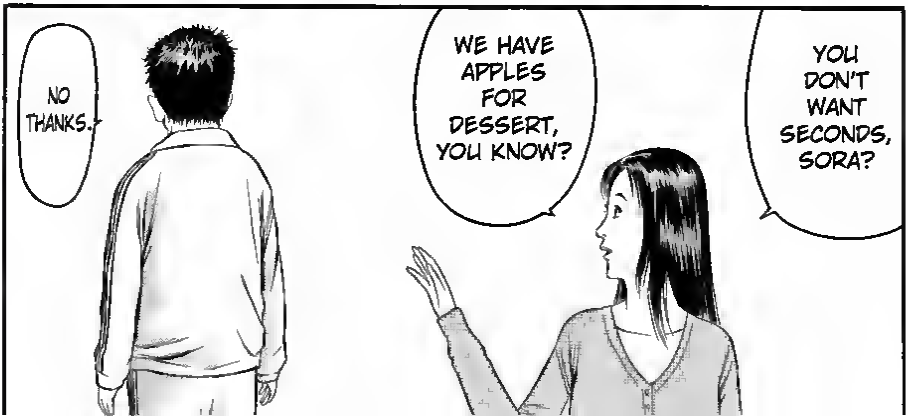

NOW, UMI...
DON'T TALK WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL.
I-IT'S NOT THAT GREAT...
THAT'S GREAT, PAPA! IT'S LIKE YOU WERE CHOSEN FOR CLASS REP!
69

REALLY ...?!
SCRATCH SCRATCH


EVERYONE KNEW YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SAY "NO".
HMPH! YOU WERE JUST DUMPED WITH THE JOB THAT NOBODY WANTED.
YOU FAT IDIOT.
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP

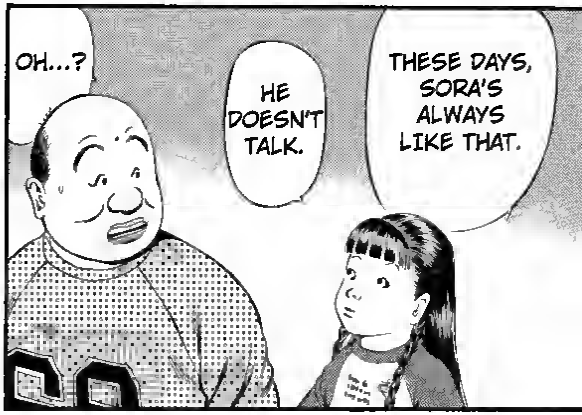

R-REALLY?!
I THINK IT'S ADMIRABLE THAT YOU DECIDED TO TAKE IT ON!
BUT STILL, SOMEONE HAS TO DO THE JOB.

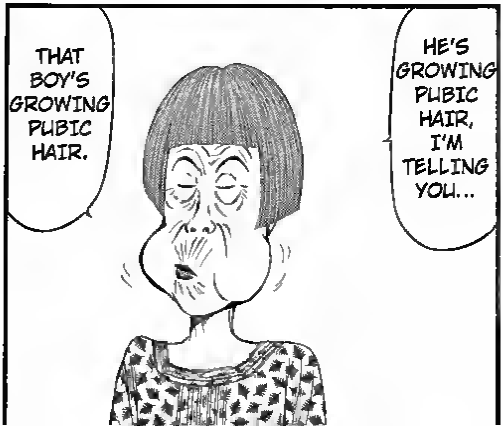

I'M DONE.
STUPID HAG!
SEE! YOU PRAISE HIM AND IT ALL GOES TO HIS BIG HEAD!


NO THANKS.
WE HAVE APPLES FOR DESSERT, YOU KNOW?
YOU DON'T WANT SECONDS, SORA?

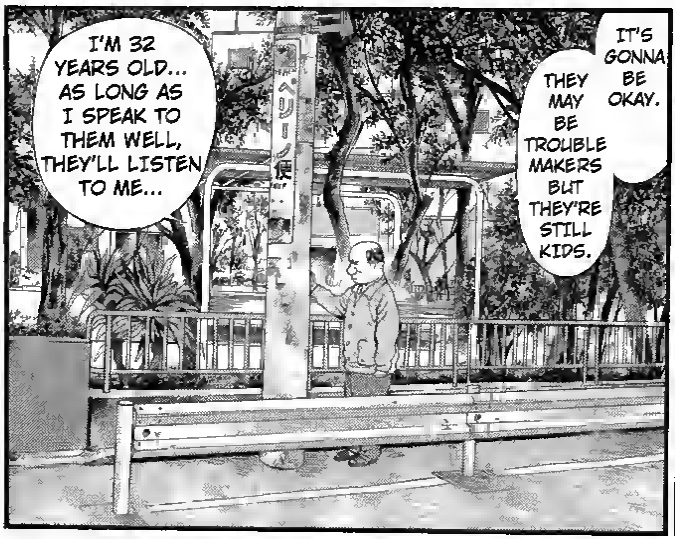
HEY, SORA!
COME TALK TO ME FOR A LITTLE BIT.
MM...
YOU HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT THAT IN YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?
THESE DAYS, THERE'VE BEEN TALK ABOUT SOME BAD KIDS IN THE TOWN WHO LOOK LIKE THEY'RE IN JUNIOR HIGH OR HIGH SCHOOL.
SLAM

AND THAT THE BOYS CAN BE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT.
THEY SAY THAT KIDS IN FIFTH GRADE ELEMENTARY HAVE A REBELLIOUS PHASE...

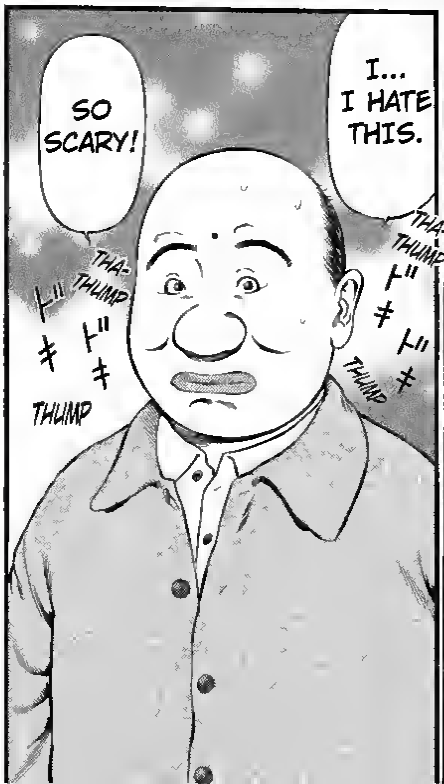

OH...?
HE DOESN'T TALK.
THESE DAYS, SORA'S ALWAYS LIKE THAT.

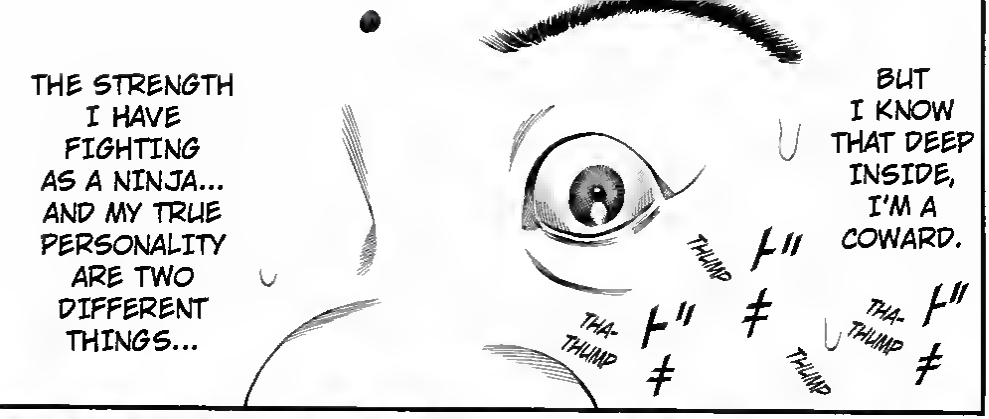

THAT BOY'S GROWING PUBIC HAIR.
HE'S GROWING PUBIC HAIR, I'M TELLING YOU...

REBEL ...?
SORA...?
WHEN I WAS SORA'S AGE...
ALL MY DAYS WERE SPENT SWEATING BLOOD AND TRAINING TO DEATH...
THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR ME TO "REBEL"...
IS THAT SO...? BOYS REBEL, HUH...
... I DON'T GET IT.

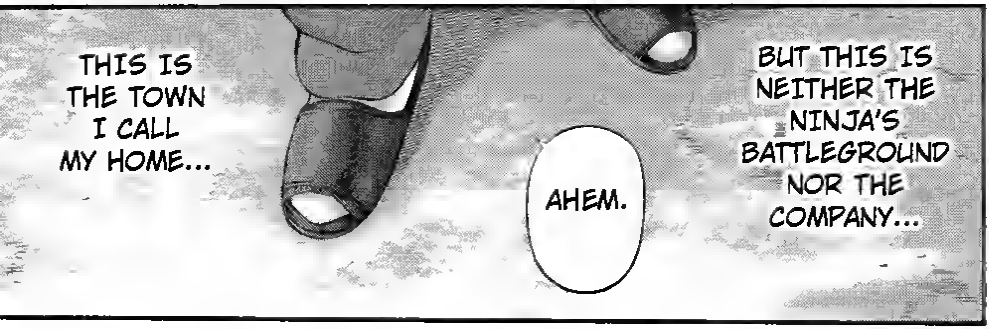

I'M 32 YEARS OLD... AS LONG AS I SPEAK TO THEM WELL, THEY'LL LISTEN TO ME...
THEY MAY BE TROUBLE MAKERS BUT THEY'RE STILL KIDS.
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY.

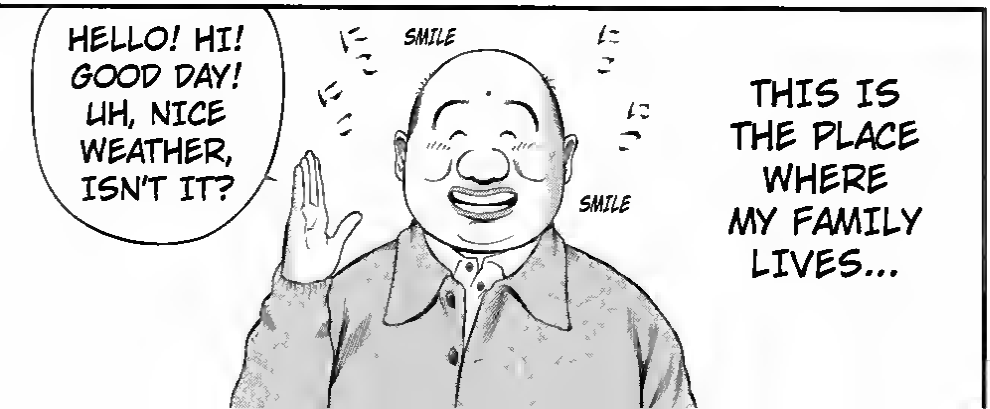
SIGH.


SO SCARY!
I... I HATE THIS.
THA-THUMP
ドキ ドキ
THUMP

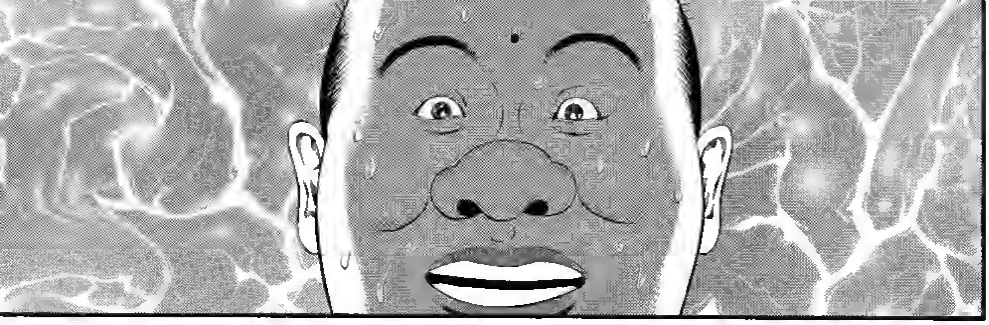

THE STRENGTH I HAVE FIGHTING AS A NINJA... AND MY TRUE PERSONALITY ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS...
BUT I KNOW THAT DEEP INSIDE, I'M A COWARD.
THUMP
THA-THUMP
THUMP
THA-THUMP

THAT'S THE SAME IN BOTH THE NINJA WORLD AND THE WORKING MAN'S WORLD.
IT'S THE RECKLESS WHO FALL QUICKLY...
NO... THE WEAK AND COWARDLY ARE THE ONES WHO SURVIVE...

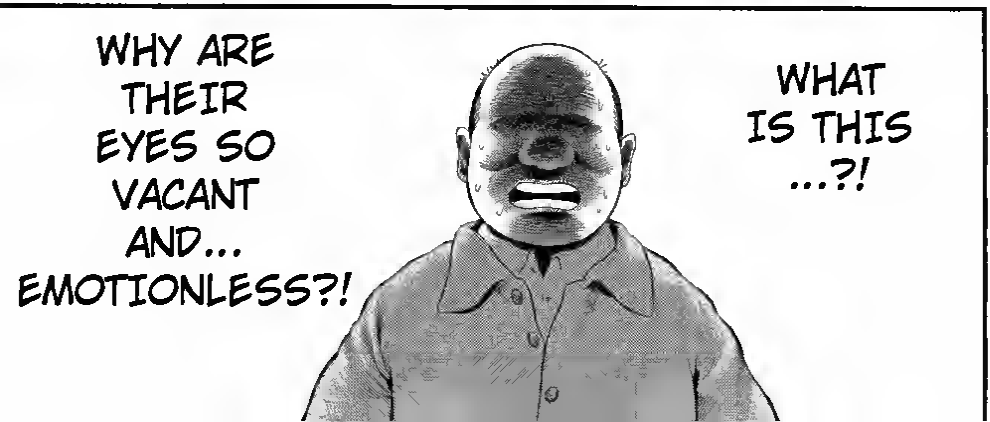

THIS IS THE TOWN I CALL MY HOME...
AHEM.
BUT THIS IS NEITHER THE NINJA'S BATTLEGROUND NOR THE COMPANY...

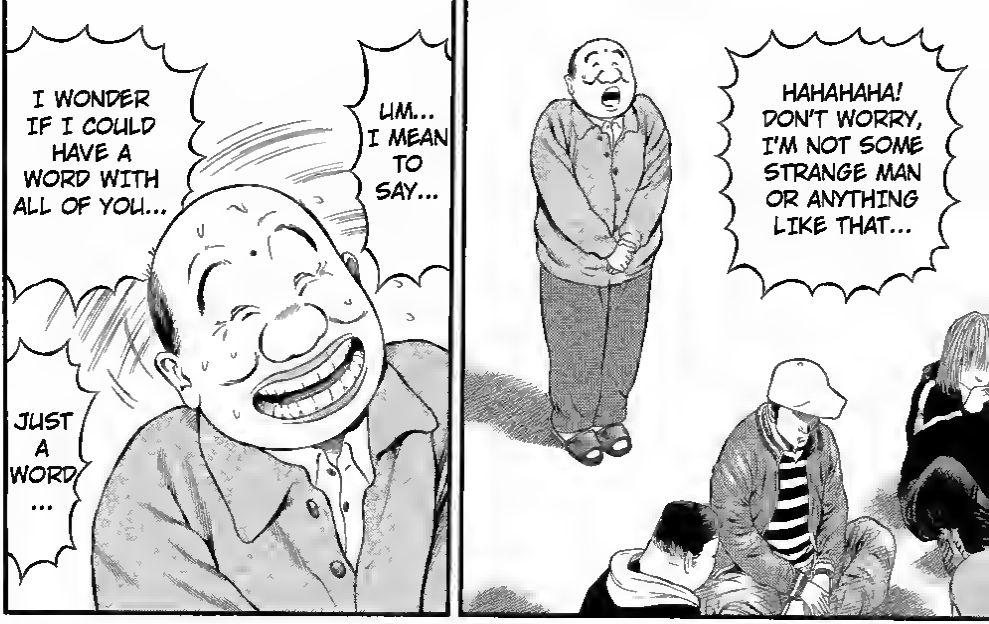

HELLO! HI! GOOD DAY! UH, NICE WEATHER, ISN'T IT?
SMILE
SMILE
THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE MY FAMILY LIVES...

THIS HAS TO GO WELL.
UH...

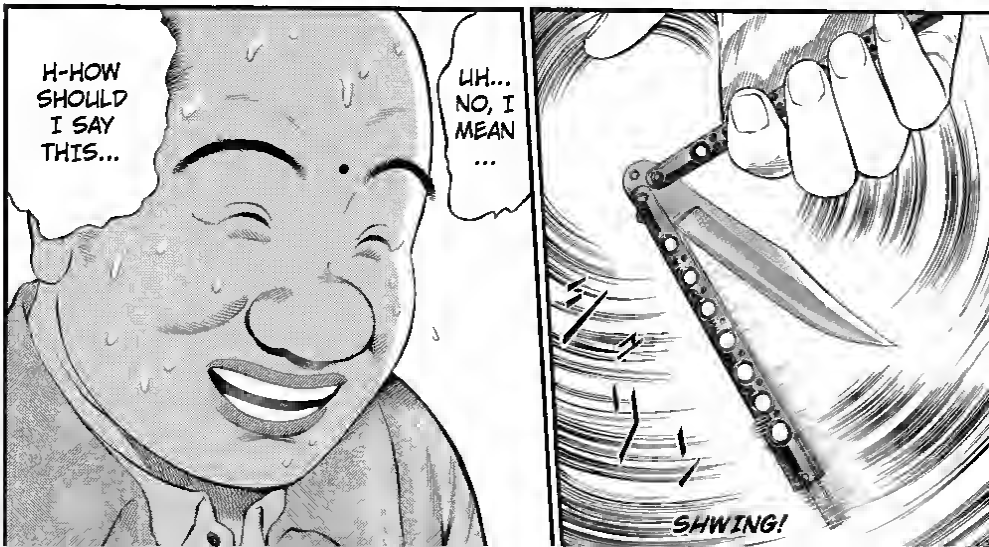


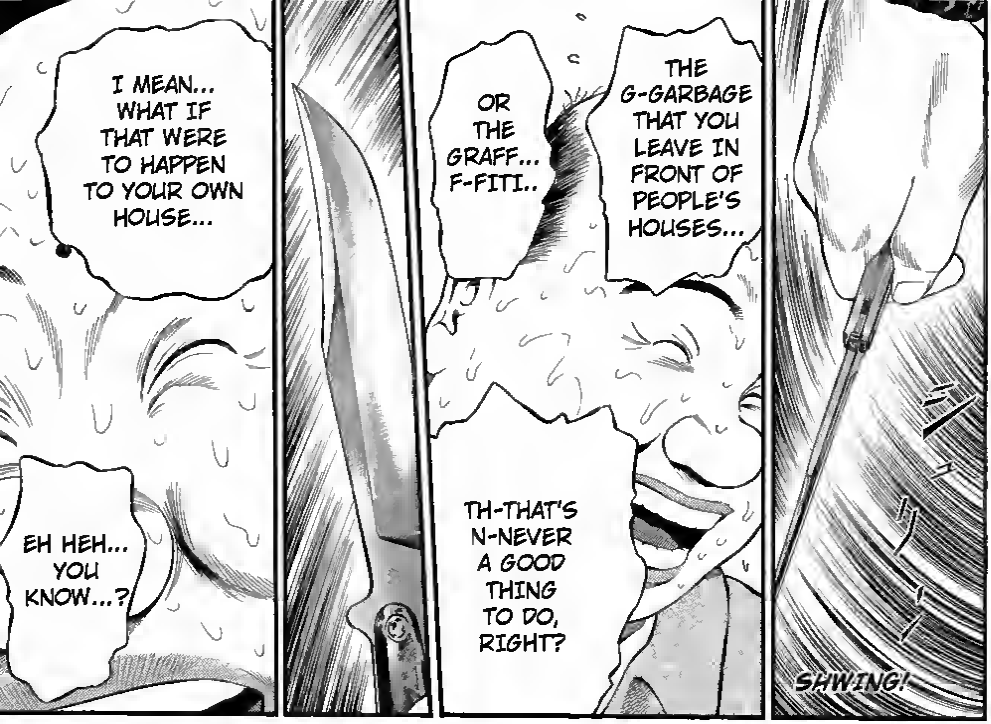
THESE KIDS...
THEIR EYES...


WHY ARE THEIR EYES SO VACANT AND... EMOTIONLESS?!
WHAT IS THIS ...?!


I WONDER IF I COULD HAVE A WORD WITH ALL OF YOU...
UM... I MEAN TO SAY...
JUST A WORD...
HAHAHAHA! DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT SOME STRANGE MAN OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT...

UH... NOT THAT THAT'S A BAD THING OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
EH HEH... SO YOU KIDS AREN'T FROM THIS TOWN, AM I RIGHT?
.....


H-HOW SHOULD I SAY THIS...
UH... NO, I MEAN ...
SHWING!


I MEAN... WHAT IF THAT WERE TO HAPPEN TO YOUR OWN HOUSE...
EH HEH... YOU KNOW...?
OR THE GRAFF... F-FITI..
THE G-GARBAGE THAT YOU LEAVE IN FRONT OF PEOPLE'S HOUSES...
TH-THAT'S N-NEVER A GOOD THING TO DO, RIGHT?
SHWING!

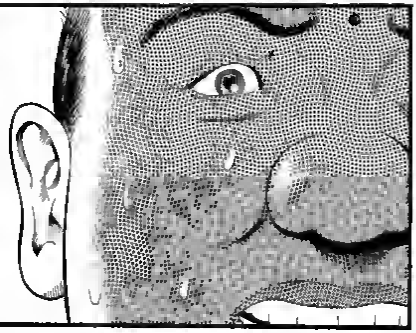
GASP!
WHOOSH!
SHWING!

THESE KIDS AREN'T FROM THE SAME WORLD...
WORDS DON'T GET THROUGH TO THEM...
...
THEY'RE AT THAT AGE WHERE THEY'RE NOT VERY GOOD AT SPEAKING WITH ADULTS.
AYA...
YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY, HONEY...
I'M SURE YOU WERE ABLE TO GET THROUGH TO THEM...
...I SURE HOPE SO...

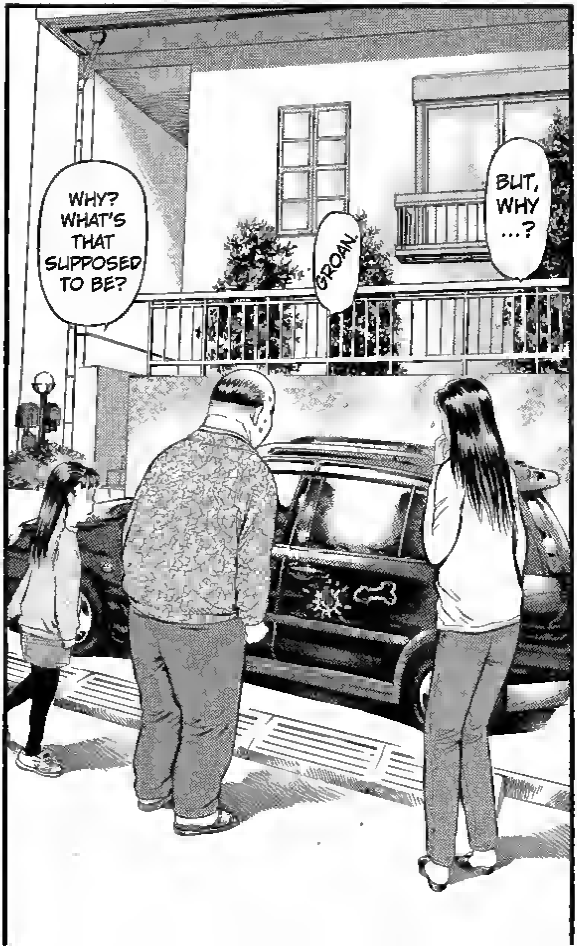
HONEY ...
OH...

FOR ME, THIS CAN EVEN BE CALLED A SACRED PLACE...
AH ...
THIS IS WHERE MY FAMILY LIVES...

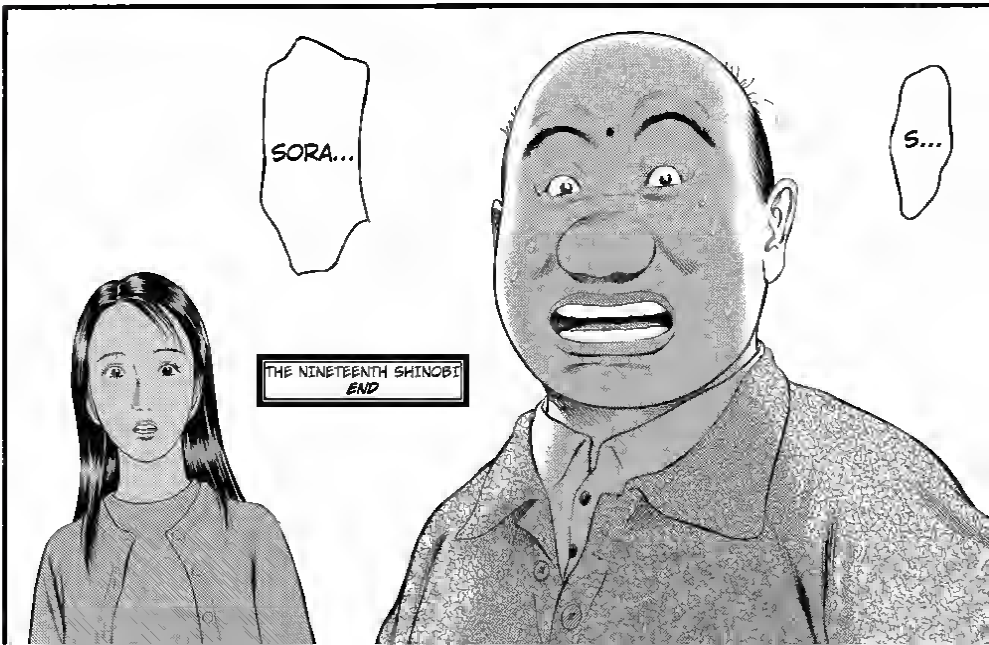
OH, NO!!
CHIRP



T-TODAY ISN'T A GOOD DAY TO GO OUT...
SORA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

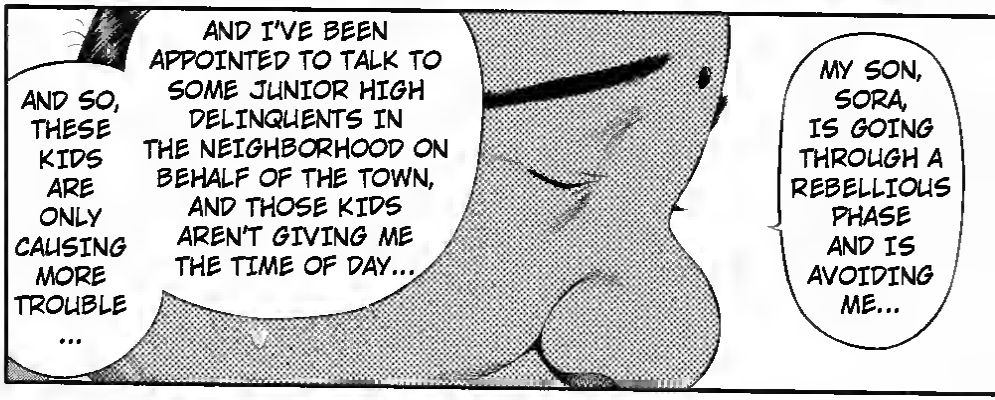

WHY? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO BE?
GROAN
BUT, WHY ...?

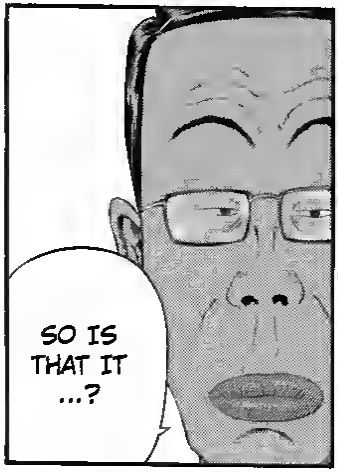
STOP BOSSING ME AROUND ALL THE TIME!!
SHUT UP!


SORA...
S...
THE NINETEENTH SHINOBI
END

I'M SO SORRY, MANAGER.
YOU BALD FOOL!
YOU IDIOT!
SLAM!
THE 20TH SHINOBI: "GUTSY GOBLINS"
YOU DON'T GET PAID TO SCREW UP, DAMMIT!
I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYONE MAKE SUCH A BASIC MISTAKE!
ARE YOU STUPID?! WHAT IS YOUR JOB EXACTLY?!
...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU FORGOT TO RECORD THE DETAILS OF THE CLAIM?!
DID YOU GET A SOCIAL DISEASE OR SOMETHING?!
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
I'M... SORRY.
HEY! HEY! ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME, MATSURI?!
SLAM!
SLAM!

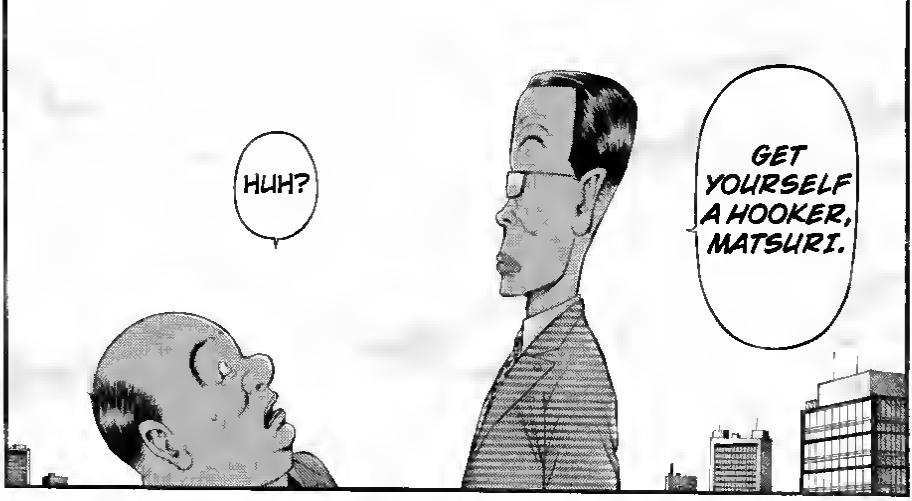
バタフ
食品
WHAT? YOU HAVE A PERSONAL WORRY?!

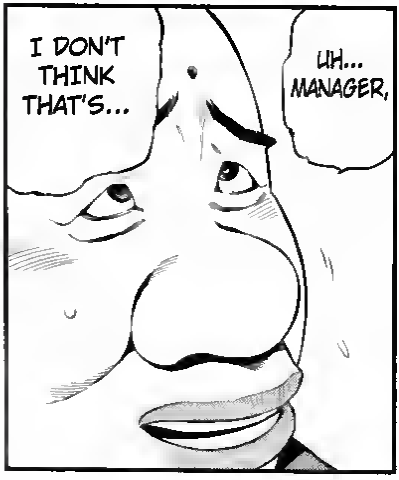

MY SON, SORA, IS GOING THROUGH A REBELLIOUS PHASE AND IS AVOIDING ME...
AND I'VE BEEN APPOINTED TO TALK TO SOME JUNIOR HIGH DELINQUENTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN, AND THOSE KIDS AREN'T GIVING ME THE TIME OF DAY...
AND SO, THESE KIDS ARE ONLY CAUSING MORE TROUBLE ...


SO IS THAT IT ...?

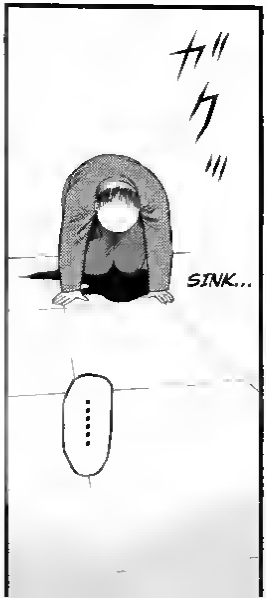
YES.

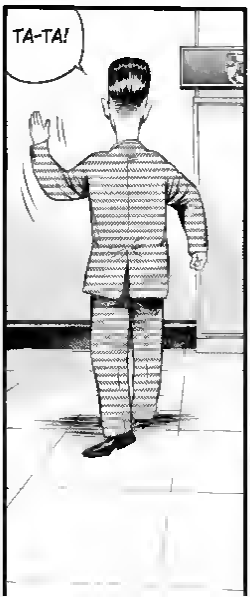
I'M SO CONFUSED I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE!
!
MANAGER. AS A MAN WHO'S LIVED LONGER THAN ME, GIVE ME SOME ADVICE!
GRAB

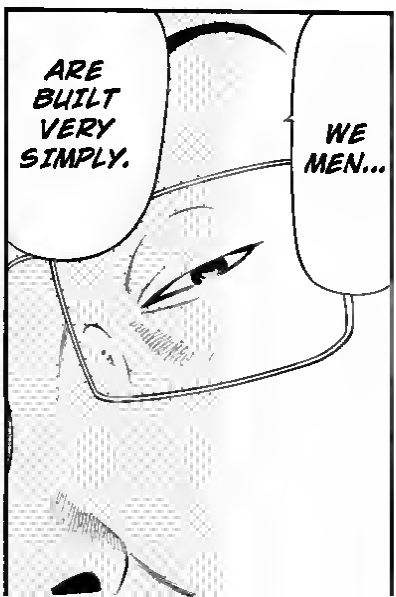

HUH?
GET YOURSELF A HOOKER, MATSURI.


I DON'T THINK THAT'S...
UH... MANAGER,

IT ALWAYS WORKS FOR ME.
IF YOU JUST LET ONE OUT, ALL YOUR STRESSES WILL SIMPLY DISAPPEAR.


SINK...
.....


TA-TA!

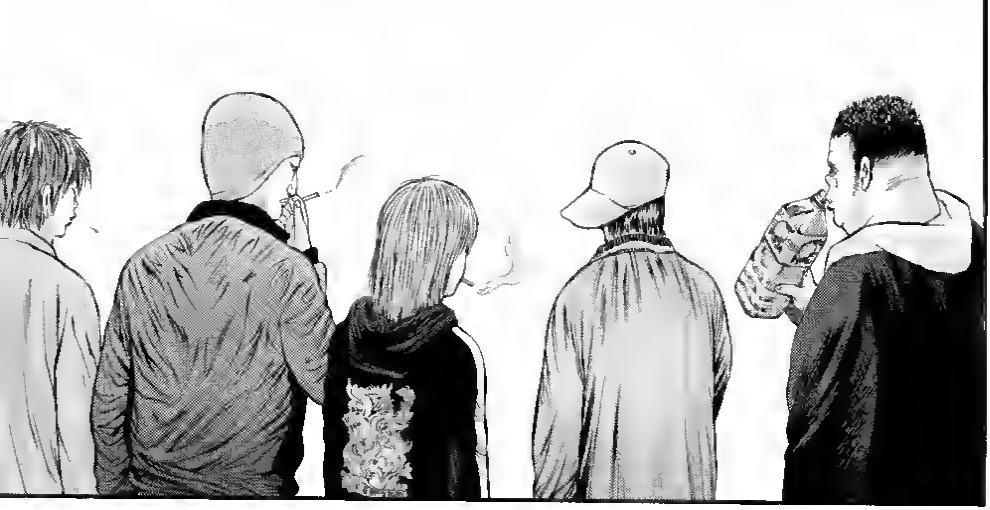

ARE BUILT VERY SIMPLY.
WE MEN...

SHUT UP!
DON'T BOSS ME AROUND ABOUT EVERYTHING !!

JOLT
HUH ?!

I FEEL SO DOWN ...
NOTHING IS GOING WELL FOR ME TODAY...

SIGH.



DAMMIT... JUST IGNORE THEM AND GO HOME!
OH NO! IT'S THOSE TROUBLE MAKING JUNIOR HIGH KIDS...

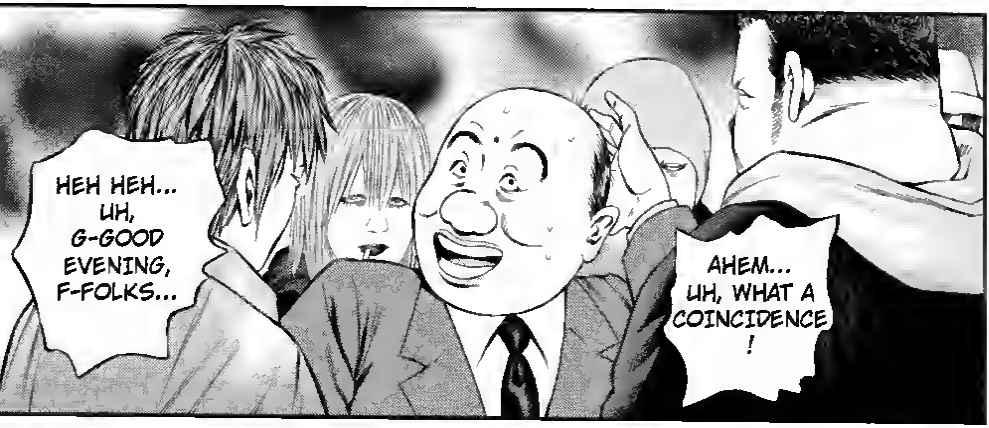
SHIT...
DAMMIT...
WHY IS THIS UP TO ME...?

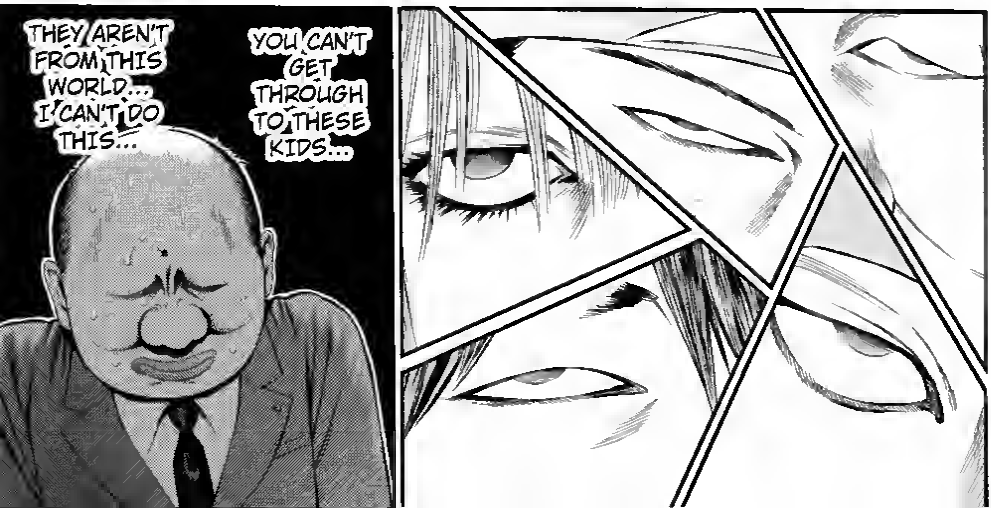
GROAN.
I'M JUST GOING TO SEE WHAT THEY'RE UP TO...
I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, BUT...

EVERYONE IN THE TOWN HAS HAD IT WITH THESE KIDS CAUSING TROUBLE HERE!
MR. MATSURI! WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO CONVINCING THOSE KIDS TO LEAVE OUR TOWN!
YOU REPRESENT US ON THIS MATTER, MR. MATSURI!

STEP

UH.

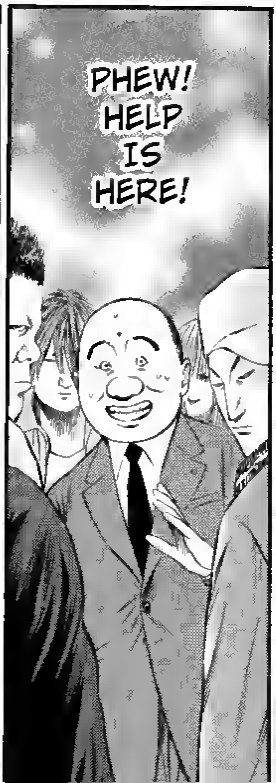

HEH HEH... UH, G-GOOD EVENING, F-FOLKS...
AHEM... UH, WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

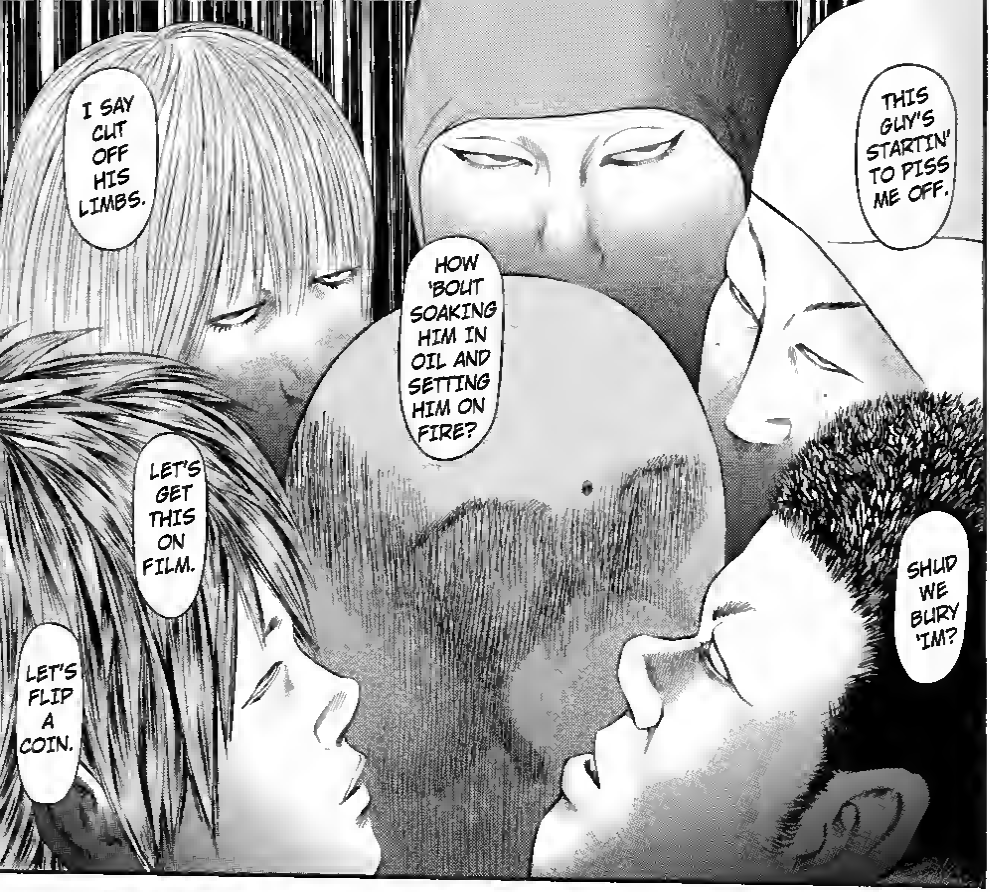

THEY AREN'T FROM THIS WORLD... I CAN'T DO THIS...
YOU CAN'T GET THROUGH TO THESE KIDS...

LET'S GET 'IM ...

HOW SHUD WE DO THIS?
HERE ?

STEP
STEP
STEP

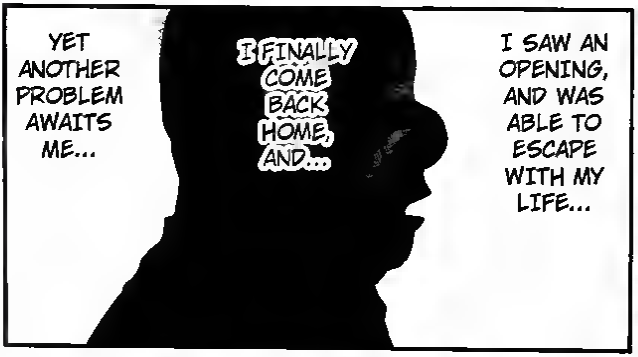

PHEW! HELP IS HERE!

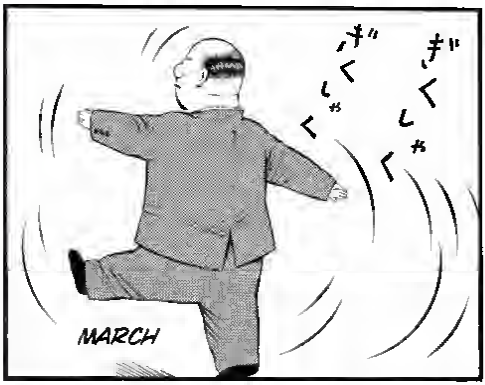

I SAY CUT OFF HIS LIMBS.
HOW 'BOUT SOAKING HIM IN OIL AND SETTING HIM ON FIRE?
THIS GUY'S STARTIN' TO PISS ME OFF.
LET'S GET THIS ON FILM.
SHUD WE BURY 'IM?
LET'S FLIP A COIN.

SCARY
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS...

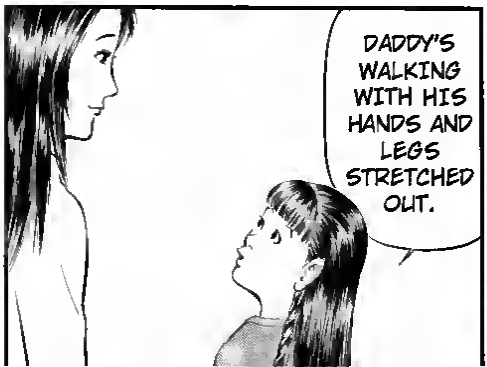
VERY SCARY...

HONEY, SORA WON'T COME OUT FOR DINNER. HE SAYS HE'S GONNA EAT IN HIS ROOM...


YET ANOTHER PROBLEM AWAITS ME...
I FINALLY COME BACK HOME, AND...
I SAW AN OPENING, AND WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE WITH MY LIFE...


MARCH

I'M GONNA GO UP AND HAVE A TALK WITH HIM MAN-TO-MAN!
OH, RIGHT! DON'T WORRY!
HONEY ...?


DADDY'S WALKING WITH HIS HANDS AND LEGS STRETCHED OUT.

HE'S PROBABLY ALREADY SENSED THAT HIS FATHER IS INCOMPETENT.
CHILDREN ARE SENSITIVE YOU KNOW ...
THEN LAUGH LIKE AN IDIOT AND RUB HIS STUPID BALD HEAD AND THAT'S GONNA BE THE END OF IT!
HE'S JUST GONNA GO INTO SORA'S ROOM...
MOTHER, STOP IT.
"IN-COMP-A-TINT" ?
WE CAN ALL COUNT ON DADDY TO COME THROUGH...
THAT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN.

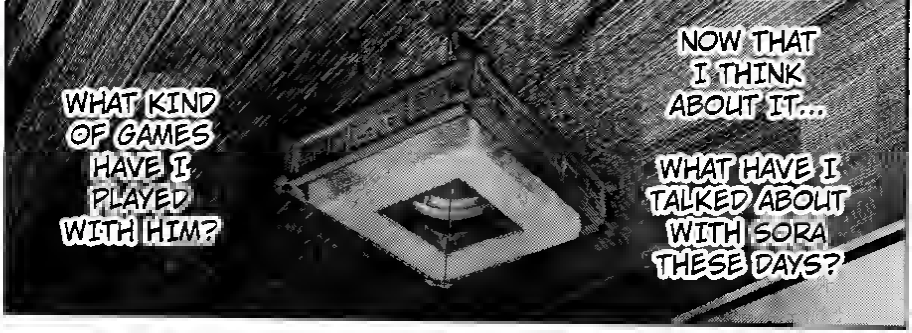
RUB
RUB
RUB
RUB
RUB
RUB
RUB
HEH HEH
HEH HEH
HEH HEH
HEH HEH
HEH HEH
RUB
WHY AM I SO NERVOUS IN FRONT OF MY OWN SON?
WHAT SHOULD I TALK WITH HIM ABOUT...?
PUHA HAHAHA ...

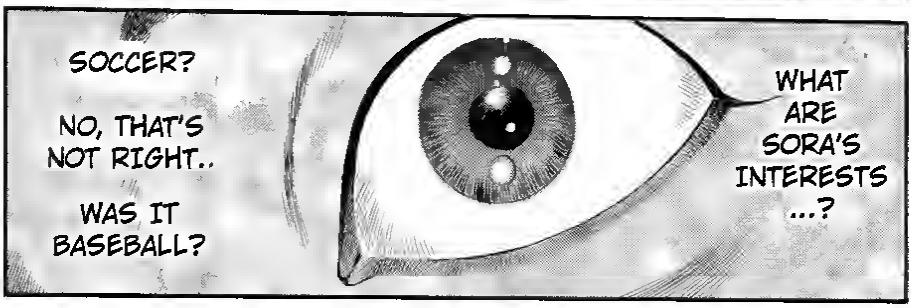
I SAID GET OUT...
RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB
UH... SO... WHAT I WANT TO SAY...
THEN GET OUT...
IF YOU HAVE NO REASON FOR BEING HERE...
THOSE EYES!
YOU KNOW...
AS YOUR DAD, I...
CREAK
S... SORA...
THEY'RE THE SAME EYES AS THOSE KIDS!!!

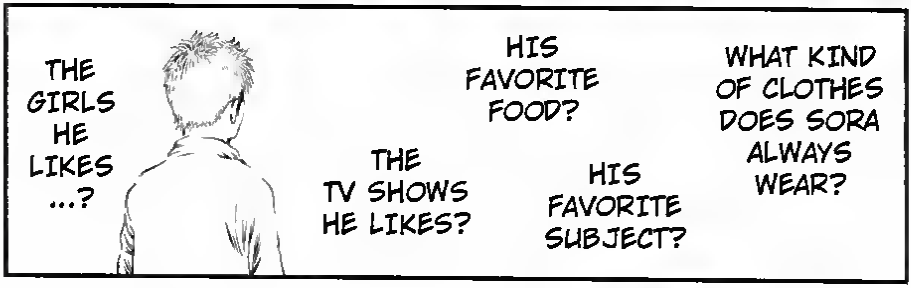
YOU WERE NEVER MY DAD TO BEGIN WITH!
WHAT THE HELL AM I SAYING?

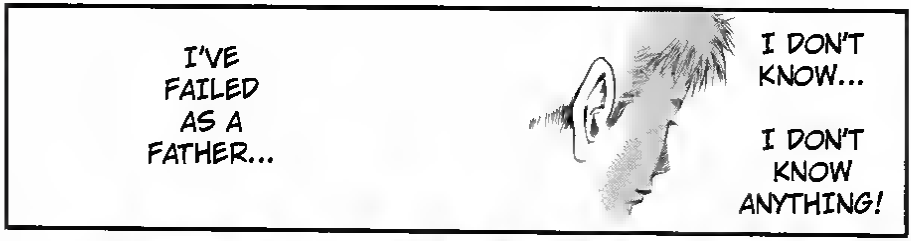
YOU MUST KILL, NOBUO!
KILL!
IT'S KILL OR BE KILLED!
KILL!
KILL THEM, NOBUO!
YOU WERE BORN TO KILL!
WHOOSH

PANT
PANT
ZZZ...
69
.....
NO ONE...
TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE...
A DAD...

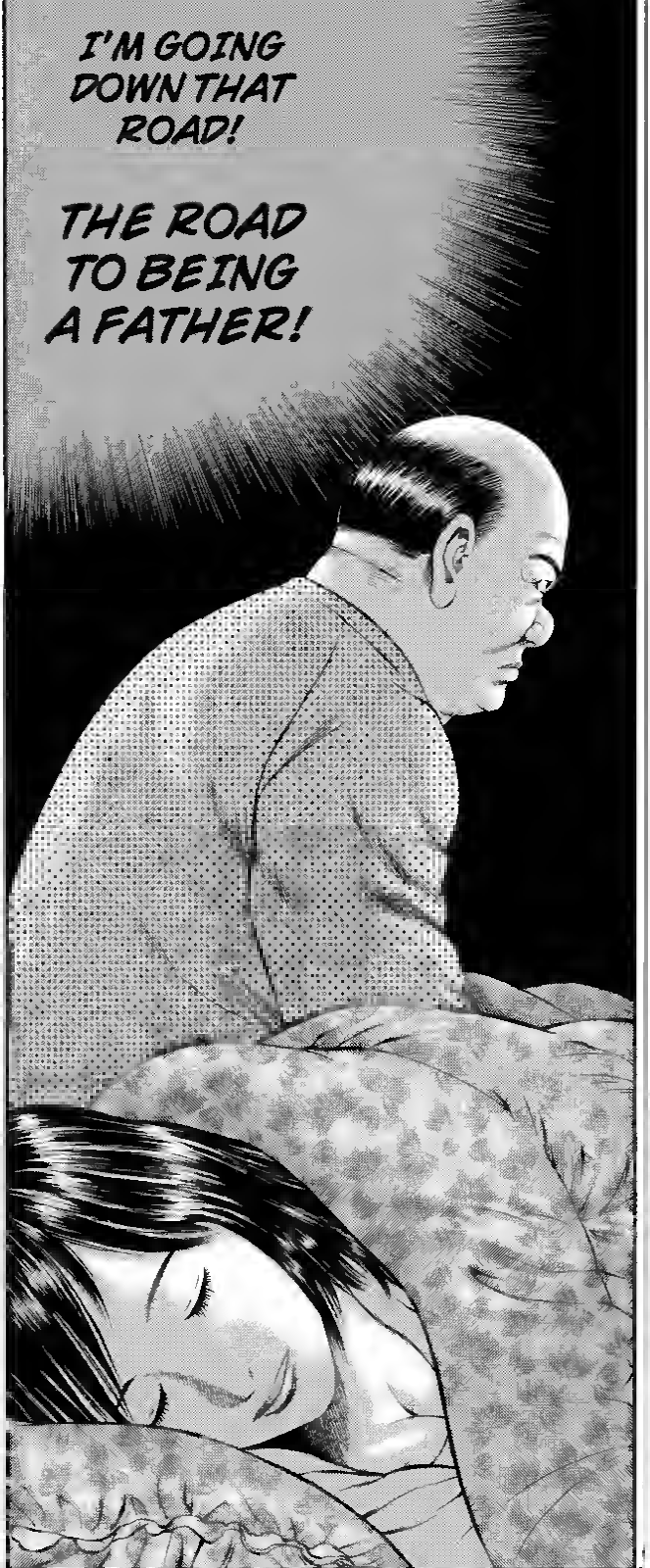

WHAT KIND OF GAMES HAVE I PLAYED WITH HIM?
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
WHAT HAVE I TALKED ABOUT WITH SORA THESE DAYS?


SOCCER?
NO, THAT'S NOT RIGHT..
WAS IT BASEBALL?
WHAT ARE SORA'S INTERESTS ...?


THE GIRLS HE LIKES ...?
THE TV SHOWS HE LIKES?
HIS FAVORITE FOOD?
HIS FAVORITE SUBJECT?
WHAT KIND OF CLOTHES DOES SORA ALWAYS WEAR?


I'VE FAILED AS A FATHER...
I DON'T KNOW...
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!

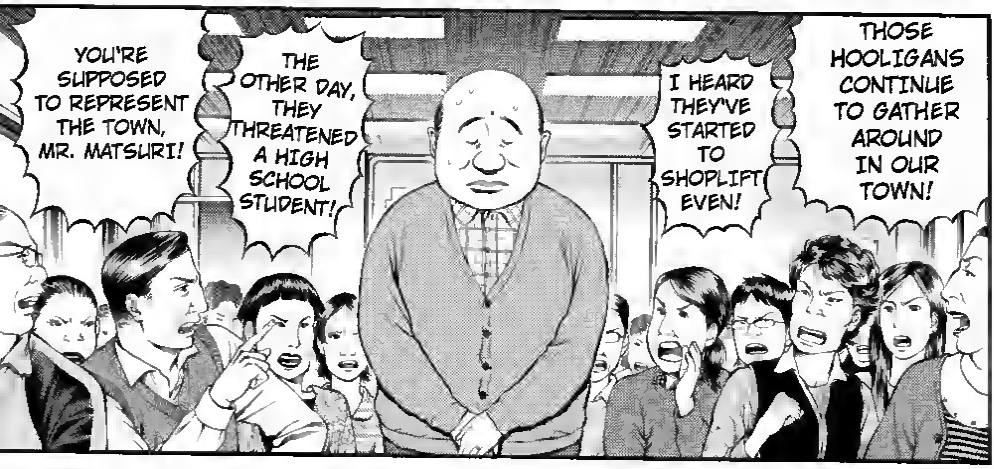
IT'S CLEAR THAT SORA IS REBELLING AGAINST THE FAKER THAT I AM...
UNTIL NOW, I'VE ONLY *PRETENDED* TO BE A FATHER...



THAT POWERFUL, YET EMOTIONLESS NINJA IS NO LONGER...

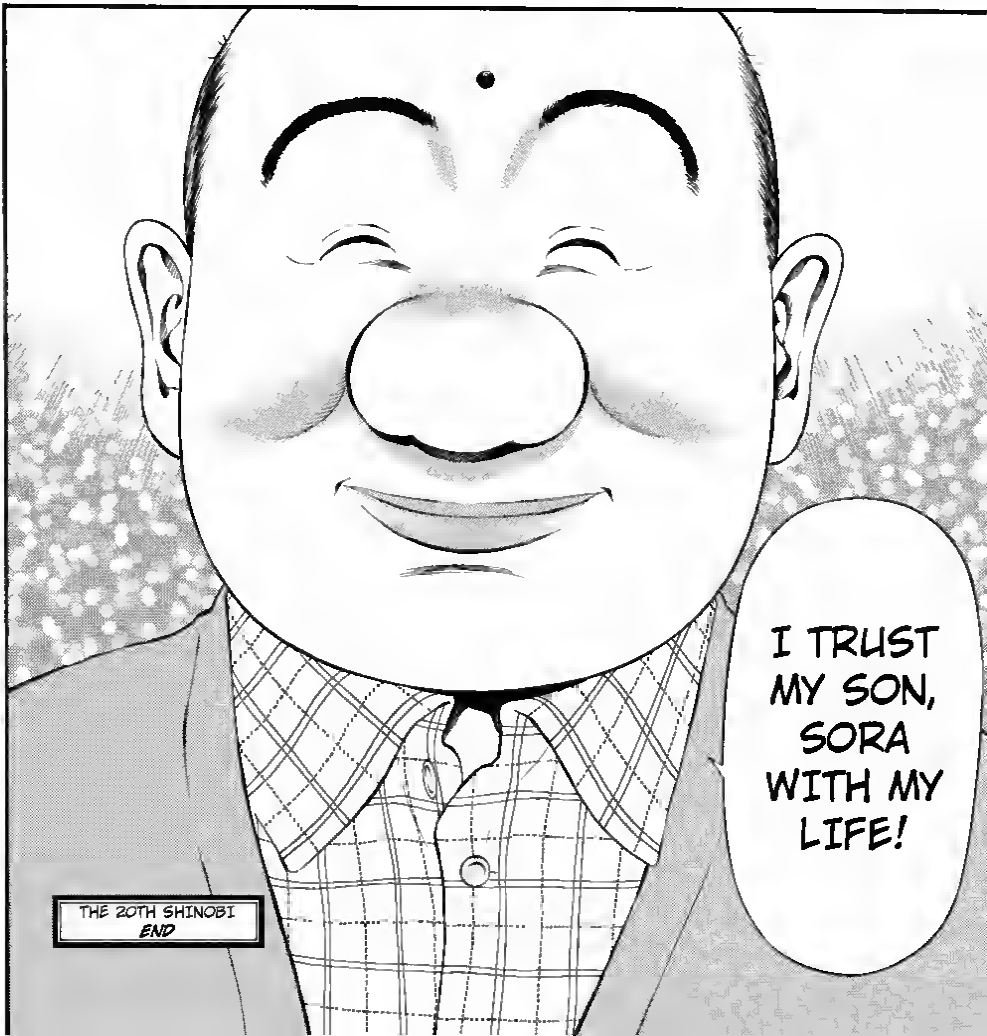
NO. MATTER HOW HARD THE ROAD BEFORE ME IS... IT IS THE LIFE I HAVE CHOSEN, SO I'M GOING TO FIGHT MY WAY THROUGH IT.

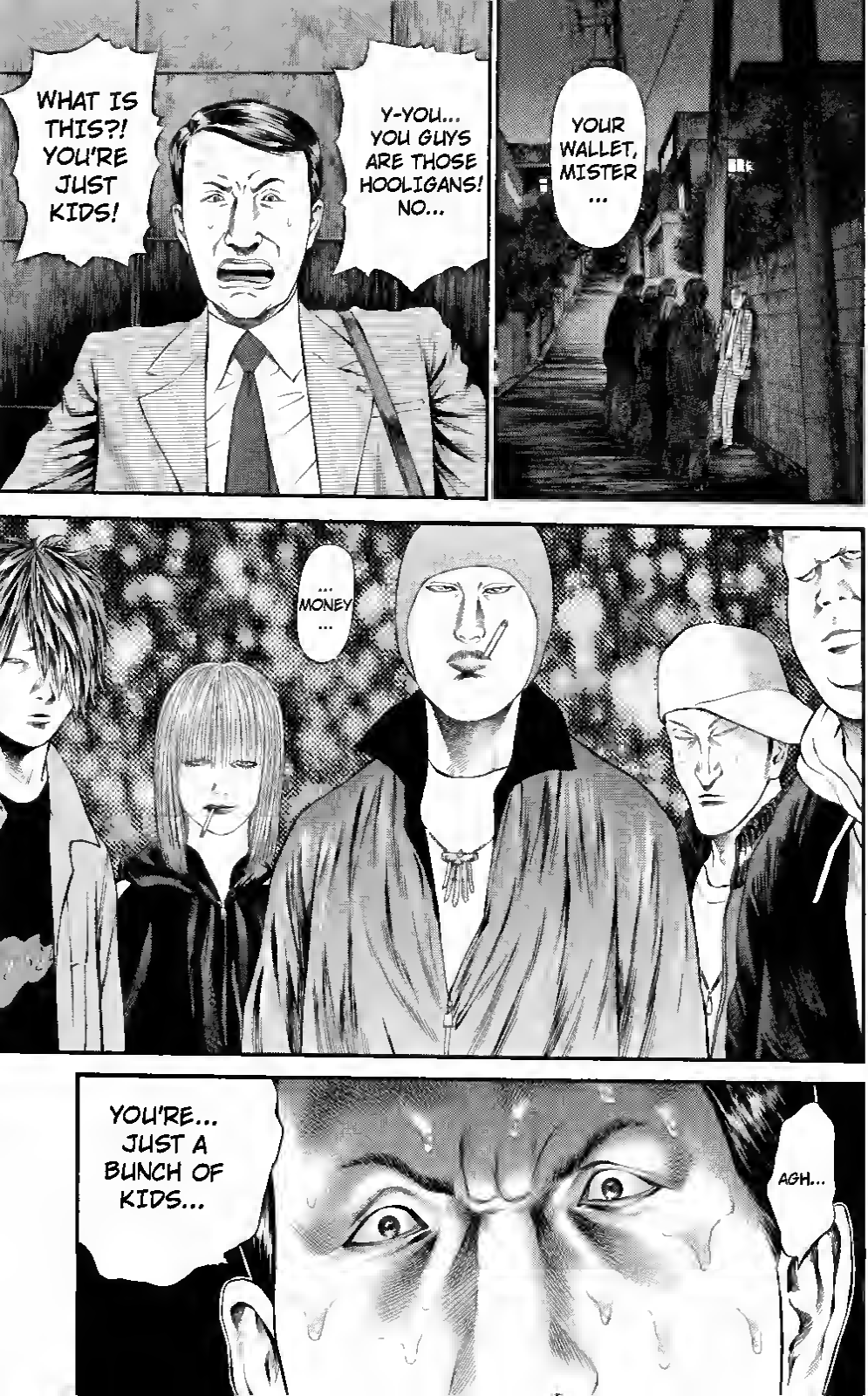
WHAT'S GOING ON, MR. MATSURI !!


YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT THE TOWN, MR. MATSURI!
THE OTHER DAY, THEY THREATENED A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT!
I HEARD THEY'VE STARTED TO SHOPLIFT EVEN!
THOSE HOOLIGANS CONTINUE TO GATHER AROUND IN OUR TOWN!

MY GOD!
GASP!
I SAW MR. MATSURI'S SON, SORA HANG AROUND WITH THOSE THUGS!

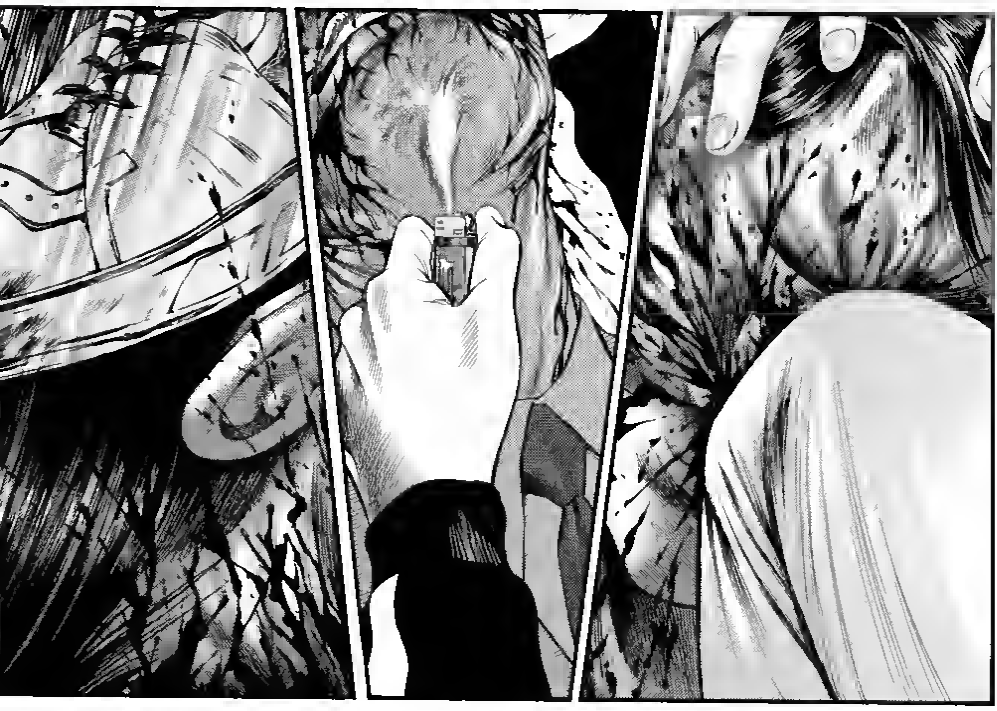
QUIET!!!
SLAM
I KNEW IT!
THAT BOY HAS CHANGED THESE DAYS, HASN'T HE?
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, SORA DOES HAVE A VIOLENT TEMPER!


I TRUST MY SON, SORA WITH MY LIFE!
THE 20TH SHINOBI
END


WHAT IS THIS?! YOU'RE JUST KIDS!
Y-YOU... YOU GUYS ARE THOSE HOOLIGANS! NO...
YOUR WALLET, MISTER ...
... MONEY ...
YOU'RE... JUST A BUNCH OF KIDS...
AGH...

THE 21ST SHINOBI: "CONVICTION"
I BOUGHT REDBEAN RICE CAKES, SORA'S FAVORITE!
伊勢屋

HEH HEH! WE'LL GET TO CHAT AND HAVE FUN LIKE WE DID BEFORE!
WE'RE GONNA EAT IT TOGETHER AND HE'S GONNA BE SO HAPPY!



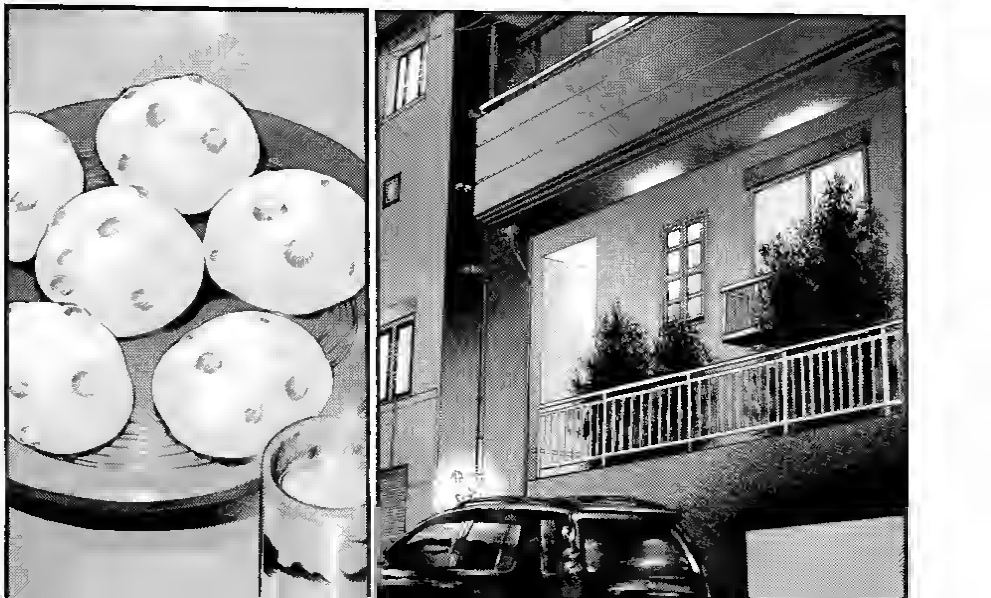
...
A TOOTH ?

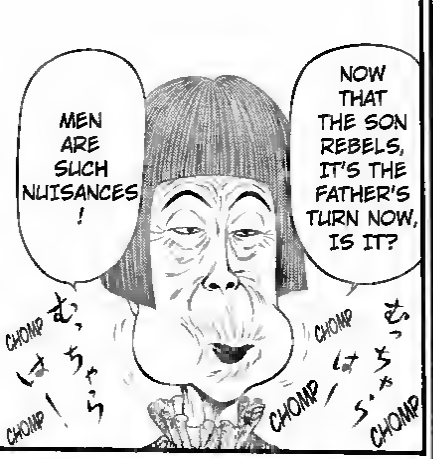
U...
U...
UGH... UH... IT... WAS...
THOSE... JUNIOR... HIGH... THUGS...
HOLD ON!
I'LL CALL THE POLICE AND GET AN AMBULANCE FOR YOU RIGHT AWAY...
IT'S MR. MATSURI FROM NEW TOWN DISTRICT THREE!
NO! IT'S MR. NAKAMURA!
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED HERE?!
STAY WITH ME!!!

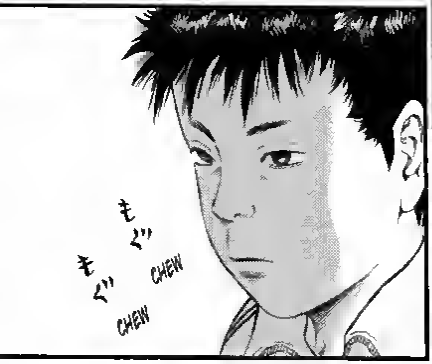
GRG...
THEY TOOK... IT... ALL..
MY WALLET, MY CELL PHONE... EVEN MY LICENSE...
HUH ?
GRIP
THEY SAID THEY'D EVEN... BURN DOWN MY HOUSE...
THEY SAID THEY WON'T LEAVE MY.. FAMILY ALONE... IF I CALL THE POLICE....
UG...
WHY... DID THIS... HAPPEN TO ME...
THOSE T-TERRIBLE KIDS WILL... DO JUST ABOUT... ANYTHING...
THESE ARE NOT...
JUST KIDS!

THIS... IS YOUR FAULT, MR. MATSURI.

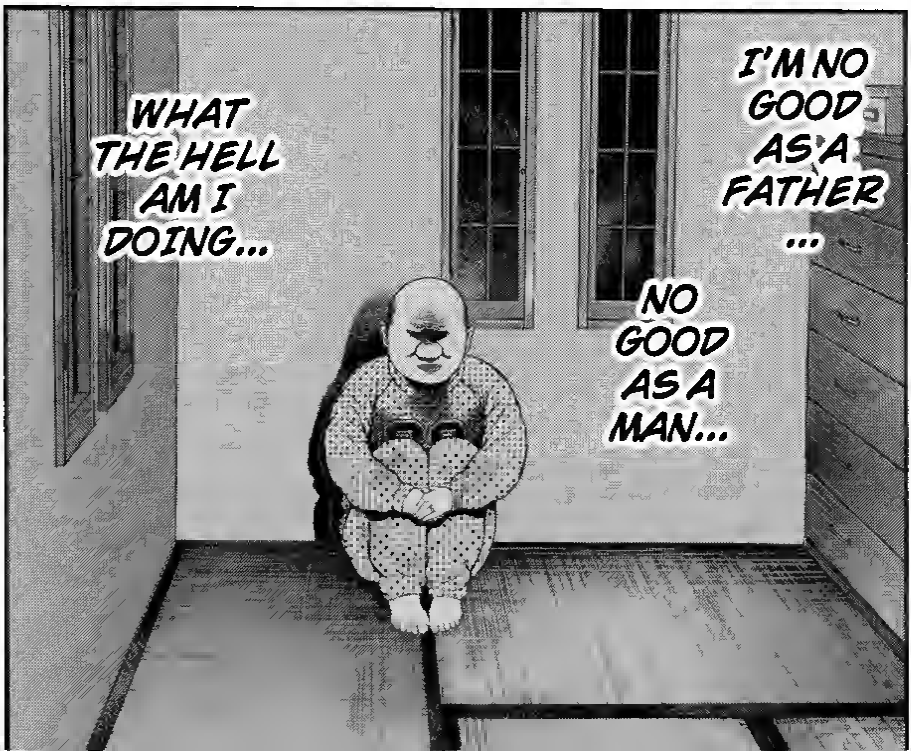
IT'S YOUR... FAULT.
YOU BECAME A REPRESEN... TATIVE... OF THIS TOWN... AND YET... YOU DID NOTHING...




MEN ARE SUCH NUISANCES!
NOW THAT THE SON REBELS, IT'S THE FATHER'S TURN NOW, IS IT?
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP


CHEW
CHEW
CHEW

DADDY IS TIRED FROM WORK, UMI!
IT WOULD'VE BEEN NICE IF HE COULD EAT THESE CAKES WITH US!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH DADDY?


WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING...
I'M NO GOOD AS A FATHER ...
NO GOOD AS A MAN...

SAKURA! OH, SAKURA! TIME FOR DINNER!
THAT'S ODD...
SHE USUALLY COMES RUNNING FOR THE FOOD...

EYAAAAGHHH!!!
SAK

THESE ARE CRIMES!
I'M TELLING YOU! IT'S THEIR WORK!
APPARENTLY ALL SAKURA DID WAS BARK AT THEM WHEN SHE WAS OUT FOR A WALK!
THERE'S A RUMOR GOING ON THAT YOUR SON, SORA IS FRIENDS WITH THEM, RIGHT?!
BRING HIM OUT HERE! WE WANT HIM TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF!
MY HUSBAND TELLS ME HE'S AFRAID TO REPORT THEM TO THE POLICE!
THIS WAS YOUR FAULT FROM THE MOMENT YOU BECAME TOWN REP, MR. MATSURI!
BRING SORA OUT HERE THIS INSTANT!
GR...
S... SORA IS NOT THAT KIND OF BOY...

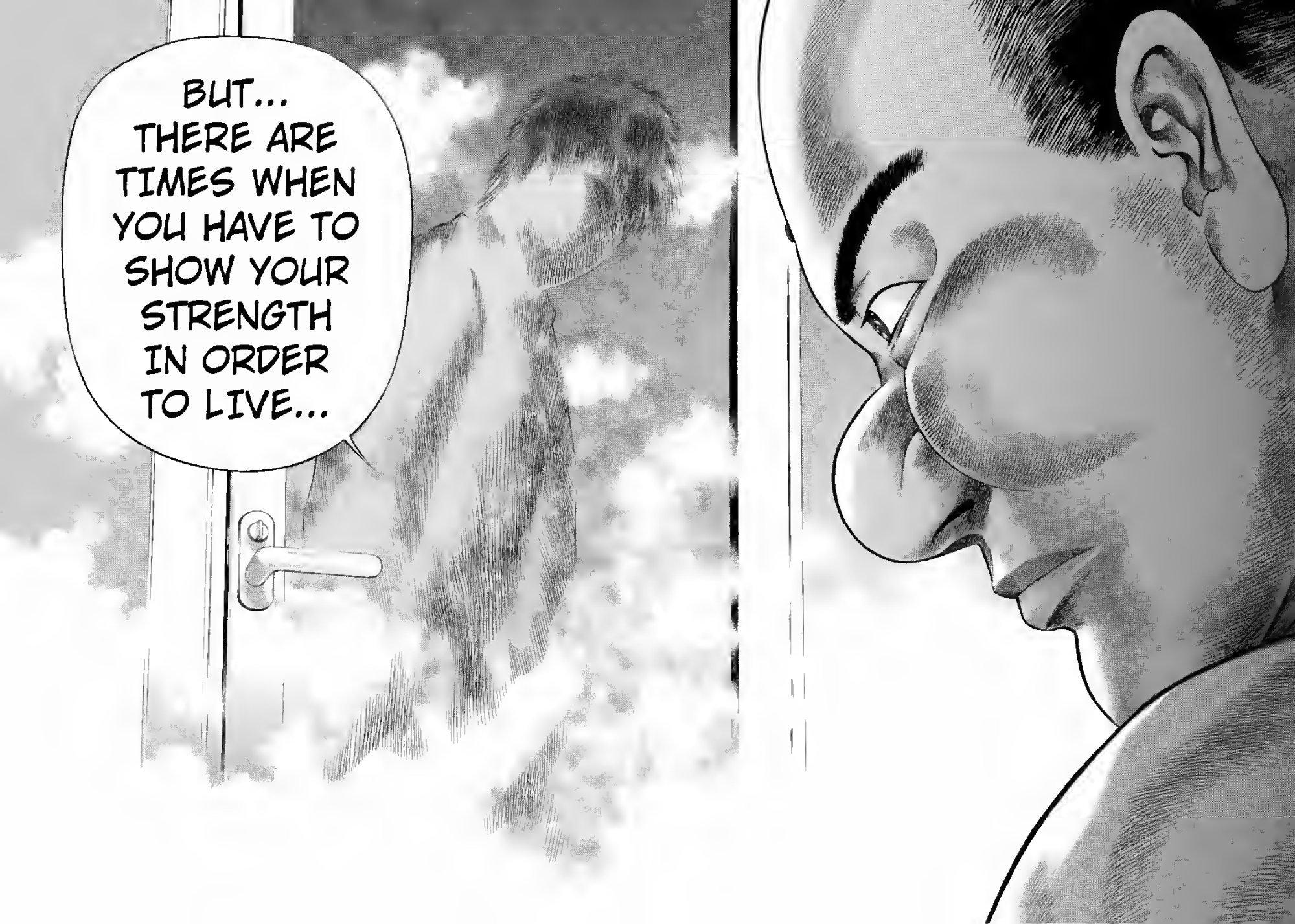
MY HUSBAND AND I BELIEVE IN SORA...

I ALSO BELIEVE IN MY HUSBAND...
AND, OF COURSE ...

A... AYA...
MY GOODNESS! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS SUDDEN CHANGE OF ATTITUDE!
AND SHE KNOWS THAT HER SON'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE, TOO!
WE SHOULD ALL CUT TIES WITH THIS KIND OF FAMILY!!
SIGH.

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...
SOB.
チャポン・・・
JOLT
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING ...
...DAD?
HE'S AN UPPERCLASSMAN THAT'S BEEN BULLYING EVERYONE REALLY BADLY...
THERE'S SOMEONE I REALLY CAN'T STAND...
S-SORA?
W-WHAT IS IT?

I MEAN... HE WOULD DEFINITELY BEAT ME UP IF I DID...
I WANT TO TELL HIM TO BACK OFF, BUT I CAN'T.
HE'S A REALLY BIG GUY, AND REALLY STRONG, TOO...
... BUT... BUT... TO BE HONEST, THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG, DAD...
I'M... I'M...
IT'S BETTER TO ACT LIKE NOTHING'S WRONG RIGHT?
... AS LONG AS I DON'T GET HURT MYSELF...
BUT... VIOLENCE DOESN'T SOLVE ANYTHING, RIGHT... DAD?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, DAD...
VIOLENCE IS NOT THE ANSWER...
.....
S... SORA...
I'M SCARED OF HIM ...
I HATE THAT PART OF ME SO MUCH. I HATE IT TO DEATH.


BUT...
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU HAVE TO SHOW YOUR STRENGTH IN ORDER TO LIVE...

IN ORDER TO PROTECT WHAT IS PRECIOUS TO YOU...
SORA...
THAT'S RIGHT, SORA ……
FOR THINGS TO CHANGE, YOU CAN'T JUST RUN AWAY FROM EVERYTHING...

ENOUGH
IS
ENOUGH...

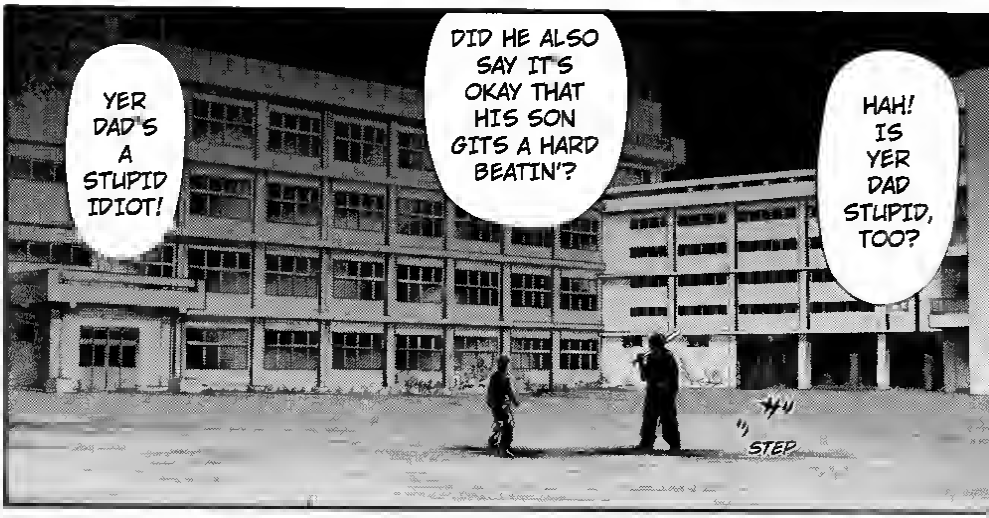
I AM A NINJA.
にっこり SMILE
にっこり SMILE
WELL, FORMER NINJA... ACTUALLY.
BUT... TONIGHT, I'VE MADE THE DECISION TO COME HERE TO TALK TO ALL OF YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.
ペコ
SO PLEASE.
BOW.
スッ
APPROACH.

PIERCE
SWING SWING
PULL

SO THIS CAN'T BE DONE IN A CIVIL WAY...
IS THAT IT ...?
THE 21ST SHINOBI X END

STOP BEING A JERK AND BULLYING KIDS THAT ARE WEAKER THAN YOU...
STOP...
白黒小学校
YOU THINK YOU CAN DO ANYTHING YOU WANT JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN WIN A FIGHT?
YOU THINK YOU'RE SO COOL BECAUSE YOU'RE STRONGER?
BUT...
THIS IS WHAT MY DAD SAID...
I... I HATE VIOLENCE...
SINCE WHEN DO YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE SOME TOUGH GUY FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE? ARE YOU STUPID?
HMPH! YOU'VE GOT SOME GUTS CALLING OUT A SENIOR CLASSMATE LIKE ME, SORA MATSURI!

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN...
YOU HAVE TO SHOW YOUR STRENGTH ...
IN ORDER TO LIVE! AND TO PROTECT THE THINGS YOU CARE ABOUT!!


HAH! IS YER DAD STUPID, TOO?
DID HE ALSO SAY IT'S OKAY THAT HIS SON GITS A HARD BEATIN'?
YER DAD'S A STUPID IDIOT!
STEP

MY DAD... IS NOT STUPID!
MY DAD IS ...
YER GETTING SCARED, AREN'T YA?
I'VE BEEN ROUGHED UP BY MY BROTHER IN JUNIOR HIGH, SO I'M USED TO FIGHTS!
STEP

THE 22ND SHINOBI:
"LIKE FATHER LIKE SON"
MY DAD IS NOT STUPID !!!
BAM!

SPLAT!

CRUSH!
CRACK HIS SKULL OPEN...
CATCH!
TAP
TAP

SMASH!
LET ME BE CLEAR ...
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
I DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST INTEREST IN ANY OF YOU.

LUNGE!
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT FROM DAY TO DAY...
I DON'T CARE WHY ALL OF YOU ARE CAUSING SO MUCH TROUBLE WHEN YOU'RE ONLY IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL...
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
NOR DO I CARE ABOUT HOW YOUR PARENTS ARE DOING RIGHT NOW ...
SWOOSH!
I DON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT GOES ON IN YOUR HOUSE...
WHETHER THEY'RE CRYING ...
OR...

WHETHER THEY DON'T GIVE A DAMN...
AND I'M NOT EVEN THINKING ABOUT TRYING TO REFORM ANY OF YOU.
WHOOSH!
I DON'T HAVE ANY DESIRE TO PREACH TO YOU ABOUT HUMANITY,
NOR AM I EVEN ABLE TO...

BUT...
GASP!
CRACK!
I WILL SHOW YOU WHAT PAIN IS!

AGHH!
AHHH!
D-DAD...
I... I...
PANT
PANT
PANT
THERE IS NOTHING THAT PERMITS YOU TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE KIDS!
IN THIS WORLD ...

WITH THE WAY YOU ARE RIGHT NOW, NO PERSON'S LOVE WILL SPEAK TO YOU!
THAT IS WHY I WILL SHOW YOU FEAR!
THAT IS WHY I WILL SHOW YOU PAIN!
BOING!
BOING!
HOW YOU CHOOSE TO LIVE AFTER THIS IS UP TO YOU!

NOBODY KNOWS WHAT YOUR FUTURE WILL LOOK LIKE...
BUT, MISS ...
IGNITE!
FWOOSH!
BE PRETTIER THAN YOU ARE NOW!
CRACK!
EEEEK!!!

!?
SWOOSH!
DASH!
YOU'RE THE LEADER, AREN'T YOU?
ARE YOU JUST GONNA ABANDON YOUR FRIENDS?
AAAGHHH!!!

SWOOSH!
ACK!

NOW'S ABOUT THE TIME WHERE YOU BEG FOR FORGIVENESS, WOULDN'T YOU SAY...
WELL ...

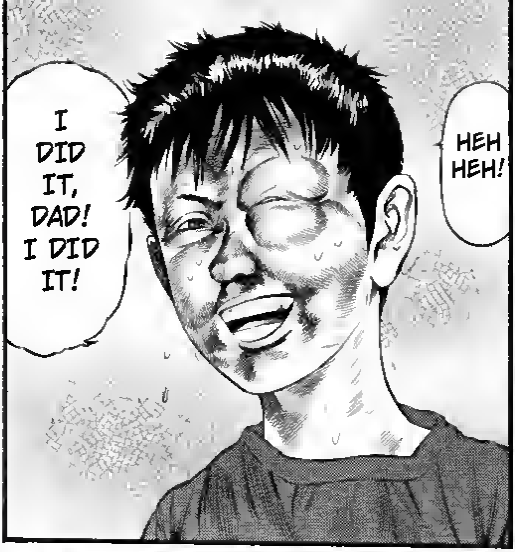
IN THE END, THAT'S THE EXTENT OF YOUR BOND.

MARK MY WORDS, YOU OLD LOSER! I'M GONNA MESS YOUR FAMILY UP REAL BAD!
HMPH... YOU'RE NOT GONNA LET ME FALL...
SMILE
DON'T MESS AROUND WITH AN ADULT, BRAT...
SHOVE

WAHAAAAAA!

THE NEXT TIME YOU APPEAR BEFORE ME, I WILL KILL YOU.
50
THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS TO FEAR THAT YOU BRATS DON'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT!
IN THIS WORLD ...

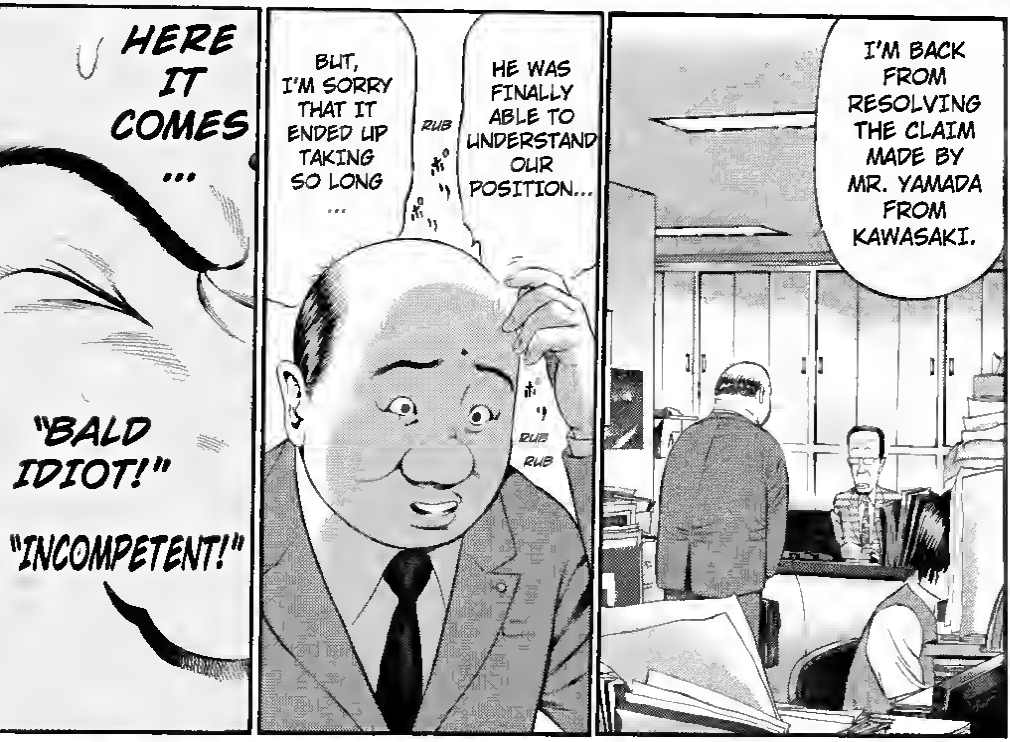
DAD, YOU'RE... BLEEDING ...
DON'T ASK, SORA.
UH... DAD...
S... SORA?
HEHE HEHE!
HEHAHA!
AHAHA HAHAHA HAHA!

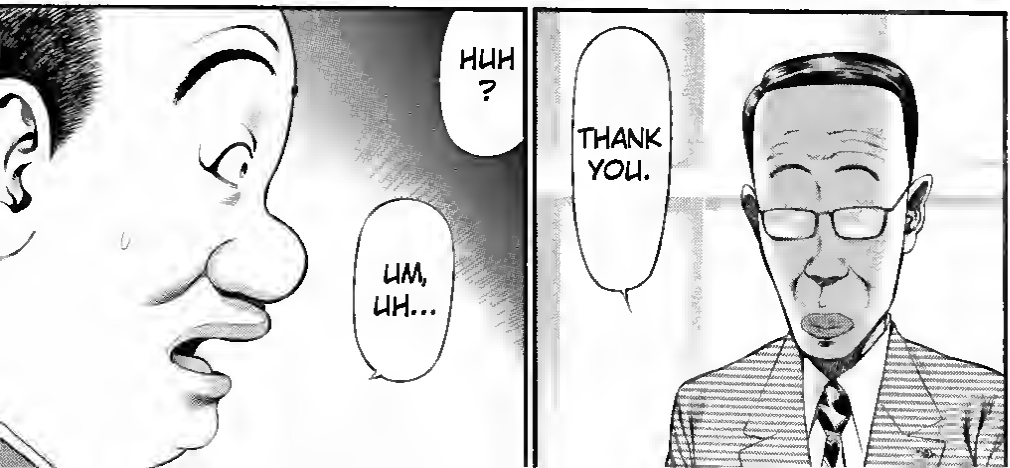

I DID IT, DAD! I DID IT!
HEH HEH!

SORA... YOUR FACE...

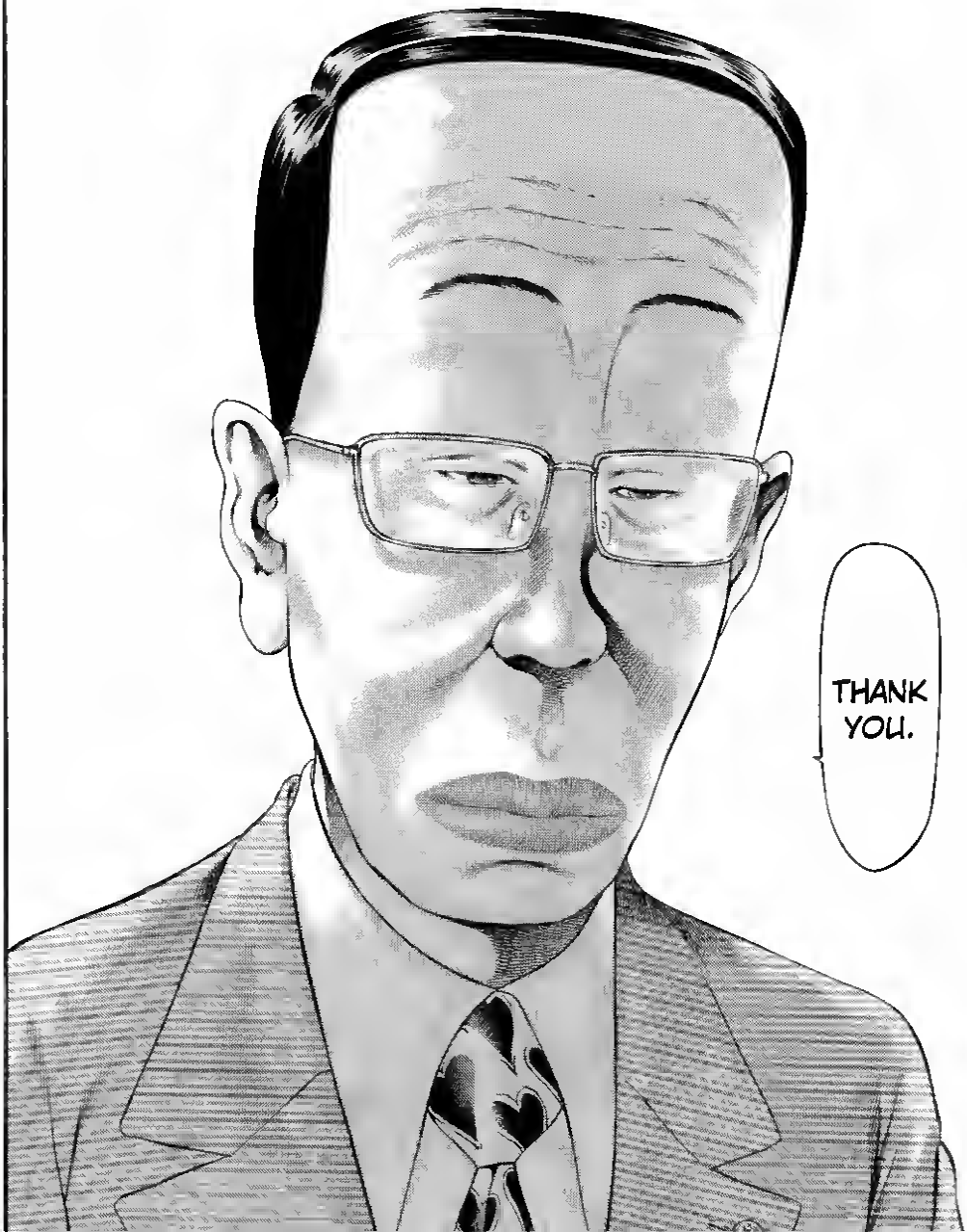
CLAP!
DON'T TELL YOUR MOM!
THE 22ND SHINOBI END

バタフ
食品
MANAGER,


HERE IT COMES ...
"BALD IDIOT!"
"INCOMPETENT!"
BUT, I'M SORRY THAT IT ENDED UP TAKING SO LONG ...
RUB
HE WAS FINALLY ABLE TO UNDERSTAND OUR POSITION...
RUB
RUB
I'M BACK FROM RESOLVING THE CLAIM MADE BY MR. YAMADA FROM KAWASAKI.

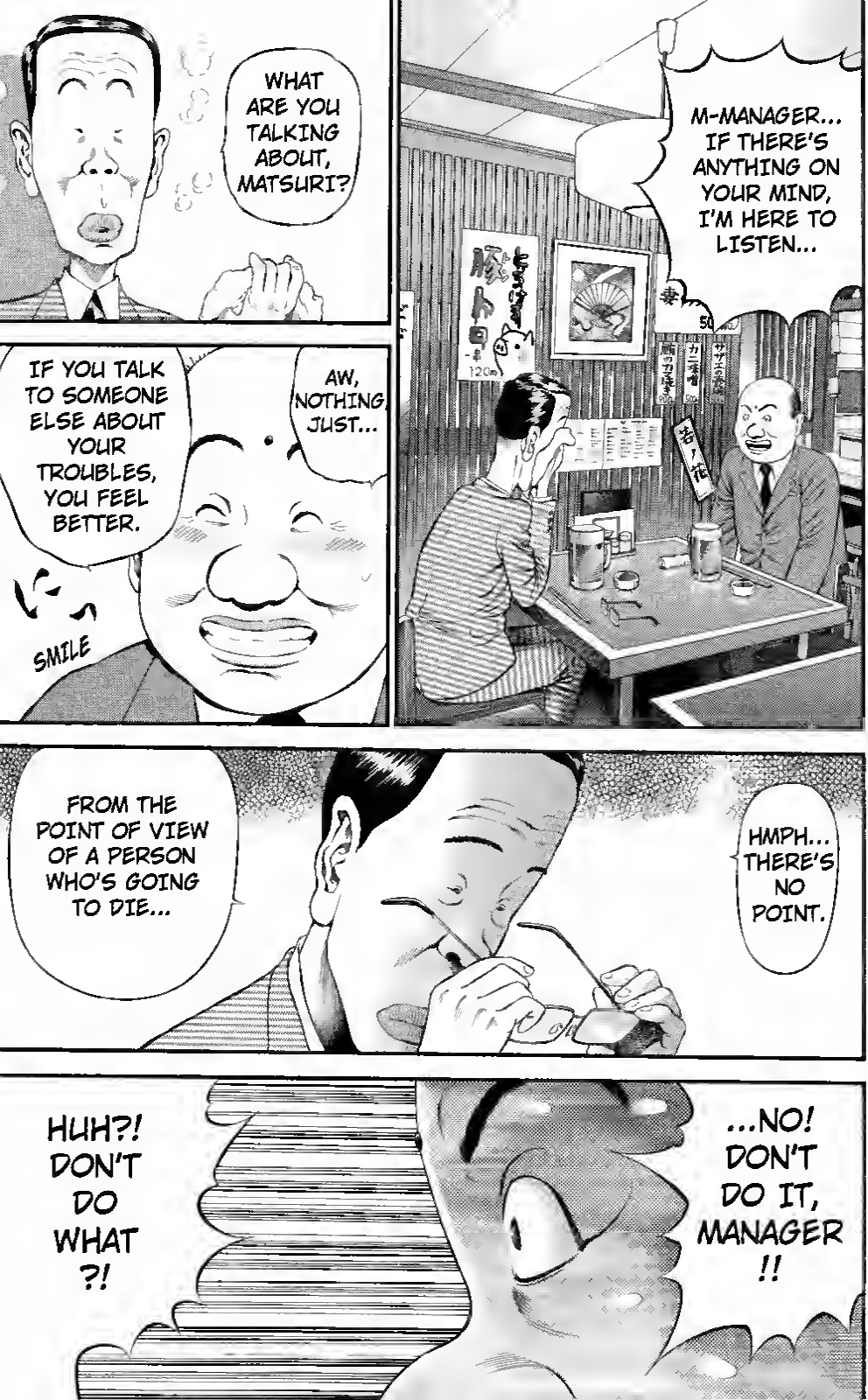

HUH ?
UM, UH...
THANK YOU.

THE 23RD SHINOBI: "CONFUSED AT FORTY"

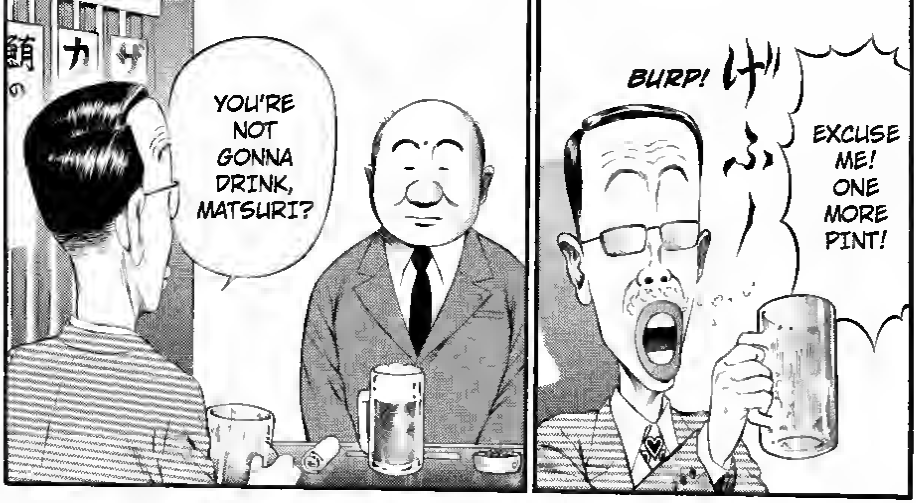


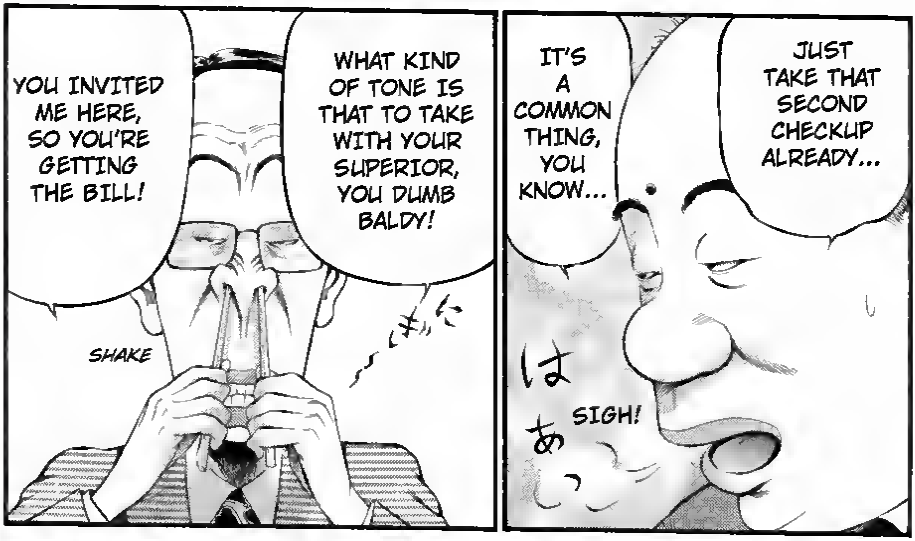
HE HASN'T BRAGGED, MADE CRUDE JOKES, OR SEXUALLY HARRASSED ME ONCE THESE DAYS!
YEAH, HE HASN'T BEEN HIS USUAL SELF.
DOES THE MANAGER SEEM STRANGE TO YOU?
PSST! HEY, NOGUCHI!
D-DIE ...?!
WHAT ?!
I JUST HOPE HE DOESN'T DIE.
THAT DOES SOUND LIKE HIM...
OF THAT NUMBER, THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF SUICIDES COME FROM MEN IN THEIR FORTIES AND FIFTIES.
THEY SAY THAT AS MUCH AS AROUND 10,000 OF THEM END THEIR OWN LIVES...
THIS YEAR, THE NUMBER OF SUICIDES IN JAPAN IS ROUGHLY 32,000 PEOPLE!
HAVEN'T YOU READ THE NEWS, CHIEF MATSURI?

AND THE MANAGER DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY FRIENDS, SO...
UH, BUT I'VE SAID TOO MUCH.
FORGET I EVEN MENTIONED IT!
あいちゃん
ゴシゴシ
RUB
RUB
RUB
ゴシゴシ
RUB


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MATSURI?
M-MANAGER... IF THERE'S ANYTHING ON YOUR MIND, I'M HERE TO LISTEN...
AW, NOTHING, JUST...
IF YOU TALK TO SOMEONE ELSE ABOUT YOUR TROUBLES, YOU FEEL BETTER.
SMILE
HMPH... THERE'S NO POINT.
FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF A PERSON WHO'S GOING TO DIE...
...NO! DON'T DO IT, MANAGER !!
HUH?! DON'T DO WHAT ?!

THE OTHER DAY, WHEN WE HAD OUR COMPANY-WIDE MEDICAL CHECKUP, THEY TOLD ME TO GET A SECOND CHECKUP FOR MY STOMACH.
I THINK ...
IT MIGHT BE CANCER.
THESE DAYS, THINGS HAVE BEEN STRANGE ...
IT'S BEEN TIRING COMING TO WORK, AND I JUST DON'T HAVE ANY DRIVE OR ENERGY ANYMORE...
MY BACK'S BEEN STIFF, MY EYES ARE TIRED ...
MY NOSE HAS BEEN DRY,
MY SHIT HAS BEEN SOFT ...
MY BUTT HOLE IS ITCHY ...
...
NO... I'M SURE IT'S CANCER.


YOU'RE NOT GONNA DRINK, MATSURI?
BURP!
EXCUSE ME! ONE MORE PINT!


YOU INVITED ME HERE, SO YOU'RE GETTING THE BILL!
WHAT KIND OF TONE IS THAT TO TAKE WITH YOUR SUPERIOR, YOU DUMB BALDY!
SHAKE
IT'S A COMMON THING, YOU KNOW...
JUST TAKE THAT SECOND CHECKUP ALREADY...
SIGH!

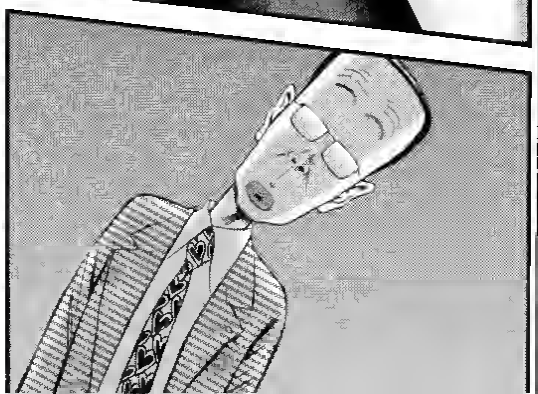
I COULDN'T STAND BEING AROUND HIM MUCH LONGER...
IT WAS MY LOSS FOR WORRYING ABOUT HIM!
LET'S GO TO ONE MORE BAR, MATSURI!
I'LL BE CALLING IT A NIGHT!!

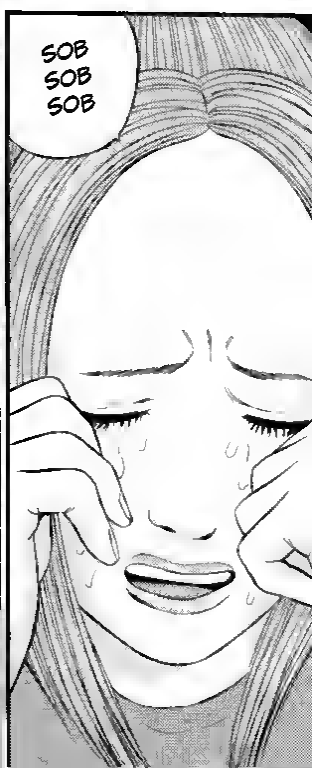
!
I WANT TO FALL PASSIONATELY IN LOVE...

M...
MANAGER...

SOB
SOB

SOB
SOB




SOB
SOB
SOB

SAD?
ARE YOU ...
SNIFF
GLANCE
GLANCE
GLANCE
DO ...
DO YOU WANT TO GO AND HAVE SOME FUN WITH ME?
営業時間
平日 9:00～17:30
土日 12:00～17:30
定休日

BOOM!
BOOM!
YEAAAH!!
BOOM!
BOOM!
BOOM!
Her

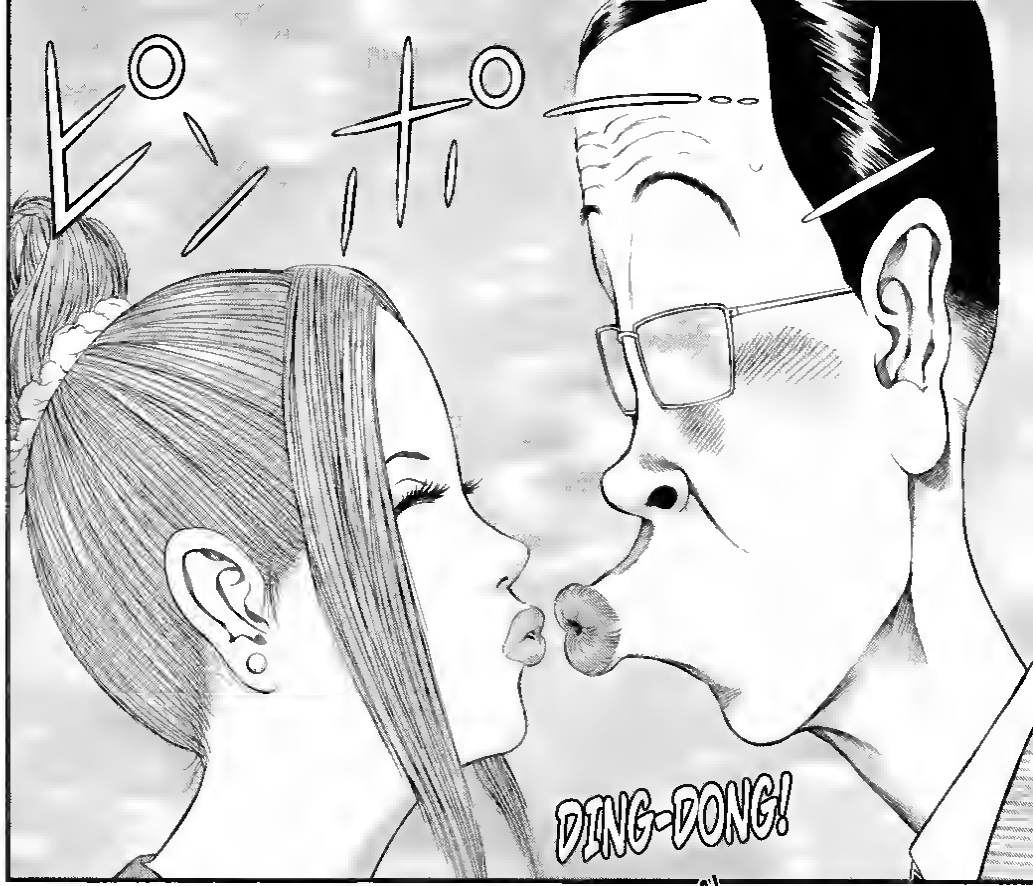
NIGHT FEVER! NIGHT FEVER!
YEAH!

MISTER, YOU'RE A PRETTY COOL GUY!
HA HA HA HA!

SHE'S SO PRETTY ...
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
SHE CAN DO SO MUCH BETTER THAN ME...
WHAT IF WE WENT TO A LOVE HOTEL?
NO, THAT WOULDN'T HAPPEN.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW MUCH THEY ARE THESE DAYS!
C'MON! LET'S STAY OUT ALL NIGHT, BABY!
SHE'LL PROBABLY GO HOME IN AN HOUR...
I KNOW THAT MUCH!
THAT'S WHAT THE REALITY IS...
WHY ISN'T THE MANAGER PICKING UP HIS CELL PHONE?
I TURNED BACK BECAUSE I WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIM...
SO WHERE DID HE GO OFF TO?
NO! IT CAN'T BE...

HAHAHA! MAKE YOURSELF COMFY, MISTER!
UH... OKAY.
WHAT IS IT? YOU WERE SO HYPER UNTIL JUST A MOMENT AGO!
UH, NOTHING. JUST...
BEING INVITED TO THE PLACE OF A PRETTY GIRL SUCH AS YOURSELF...
HAHA! THAT'S NORMAL!
BESIDES, I LIKE YOU, MISTER! ♡

CALL ME "JILL", YEAH!
I'M A GOOD PERSON, BUT IF SOMEONE ELSE WITH ULTERIOR MOTIVES CAME IN HERE, THEY MIGHT'VE GOTTEN INSIDE YOUR PANTS BY NOW!
YOU KNOW... YOU SHOULDN'T OFFER UP YOUR PLACE TO A STRANGER SO EASILY...
J... JILL ...
HAHAHA! MISTER, YOU'RE FUNNY!
YOU'RE A FOREIGNER?
J-JILL?
TUG.
SURE!
CAN I KISS YOU?


DING-DONG!

MISTER, GO HIDE SOMEWHERE!
HURRY!!!
HUH?!
OH, NO!
DING-DONG!
DING-DONG!
DING-DONG!
DING-DONG!
DING-DONG!
DING-DONG!
DING-DONG!
DING-DONG!

M-
MANAGER
!!
MATSURI,
I'M...
I'M NO
GOOD
ANYMORE
...
HUH
?!
W-
WHERE
WERE
YOU?!
I'VE BEEN
CALLING
YOU OVER
AND OVER
AGAIN!
HOW COME
YOU DIDN'T
ANSWER
YOUR
PHONE?!
WHEN
I WAS
YOUNG,
I WAS
NEVER
POPULAR.
AND I
NEVER
HAD ANY
INTERESTING
DRAMA
IN MY LIFE.
I ONLY GOT
OLDER...
MANAGER!!!
AND NOW,
I REALIZE
I'M ALREADY
FORTY-FIVE
YEARS OLD.

TELL ME WHERE YOU ARE, MANAGER!!
I'M HEADING OVER THERE RIGHT NOW!!
I COULD SEE MY LIFE FLASHING BEFORE ME...
I'M NO LONGER AT AN AGE WHERE I CAN BE ADVENTUR-OUS.

I CAN'T FALL IN LOVE ANYMORE.
DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH, MANAGER !!!
IT'S ALL TOO TRAGIC, MATSURI ...
THE 23RD SHINOBI ✕ END

MY ADOLESCENT DAYS, THE DAYS WHEN I LONGED FOR LOVE THE MOST, WERE TRULY TRAGIC...
PSST.
PSST.
I LOST MY VIRGINITY AT 22.
IT WAS WHEN I WENT ON A GRADUATION TRIP ALONE BEFORE WORKING AT THE COMPANY.
I CAME UPON A STRANGE PLACE ON A DISTANT ISLAND WHERE THERE WAS ONLY ONE HOUSE...
A LOCAL FISHERMAN TOLD ME THERE WOULD BE A 54-YEAR OLD WOMAN LIVING THERE.
ROAR!
ROAR!
THE ONLY THING I REMEMBER ABOUT HER IS HER TERRIFYING VOICE THAT SOUNDED LIKE A MONSTER.
SNIFF ...
WHAT A MISERABLE LIFE I'VE LIVED...

I HATE GOD.
IF ONLY HE HAD CREATED EVERYONE EQUALLY, THERE WOULD BE NO MORE USELESS WORRIES.
THE 24TH SHINOBI: "WOMEN"

WHOOSH!
DON'T YOU THINK WE'D BE ABLE TO LIVE MORE PURPOSEFUL LIVES, MATSURI?
IF HE DIDN'T GIVE US SEXUAL DESIRES ...
HUH ?!
I'M... RUNNING AWAY...
課長
IF I'M FOUND OUT, I'LL BE KILLED...
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING?!
M-MANAGER, WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?!
2F
CRASH

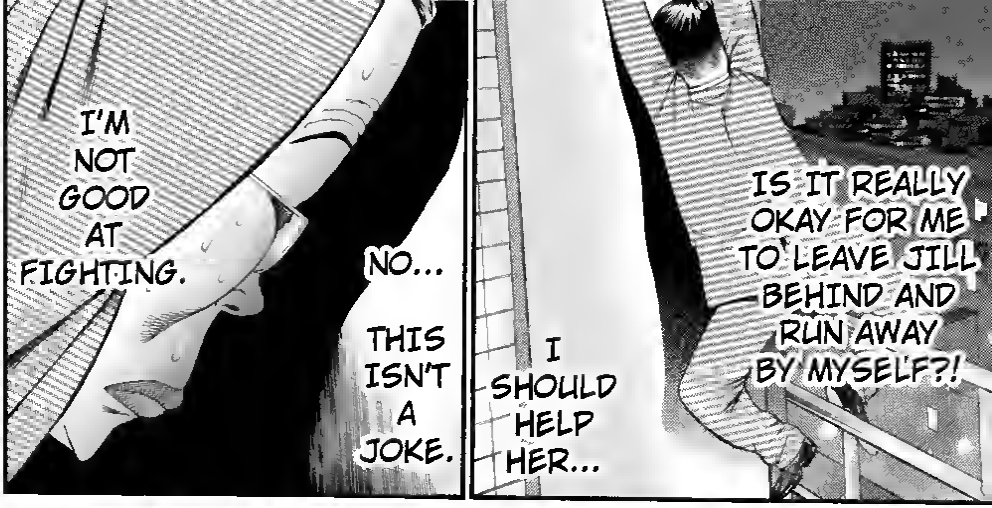
IF YOU DON'T MAKE THE MONEY, HOW THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO EAT?!
SLAP!
JILL, YOU DON'T LEAVE THE STORE WITHOUT MY PERMISSION!
SLAP!
SLAP!
SHUT UP, WOMAN!!
I... I WAS CRYING BECAUSE I HATE BEING AROUND THOSE DIRTY CLIENTS.
I'M... I'M SORRY, TAKUN!

POW!

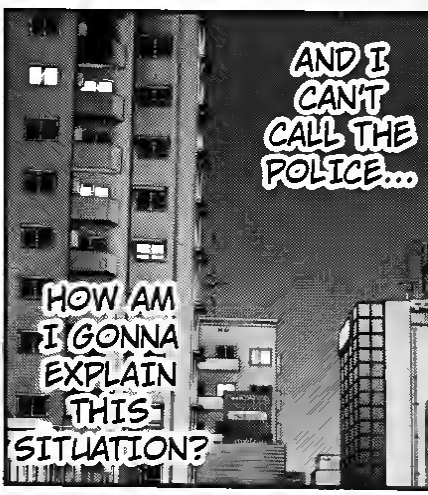
YOU UNGRATEFUL WENCH!
WHO DO YOU THINK HELPED A DUMB GIRL LIKE YOU GET ANY WORK IN THE FIRST PLACE?!
GROAN!

THUD

AGH!
THUMP!


I'M NOT GOOD AT FIGHTING.
NO... THIS ISN'T A JOKE.
I SHOULD HELP HER...
IS IT REALLY OKAY FOR ME TO LEAVE JILL BEHIND AND RUN AWAY BY MYSELF?!

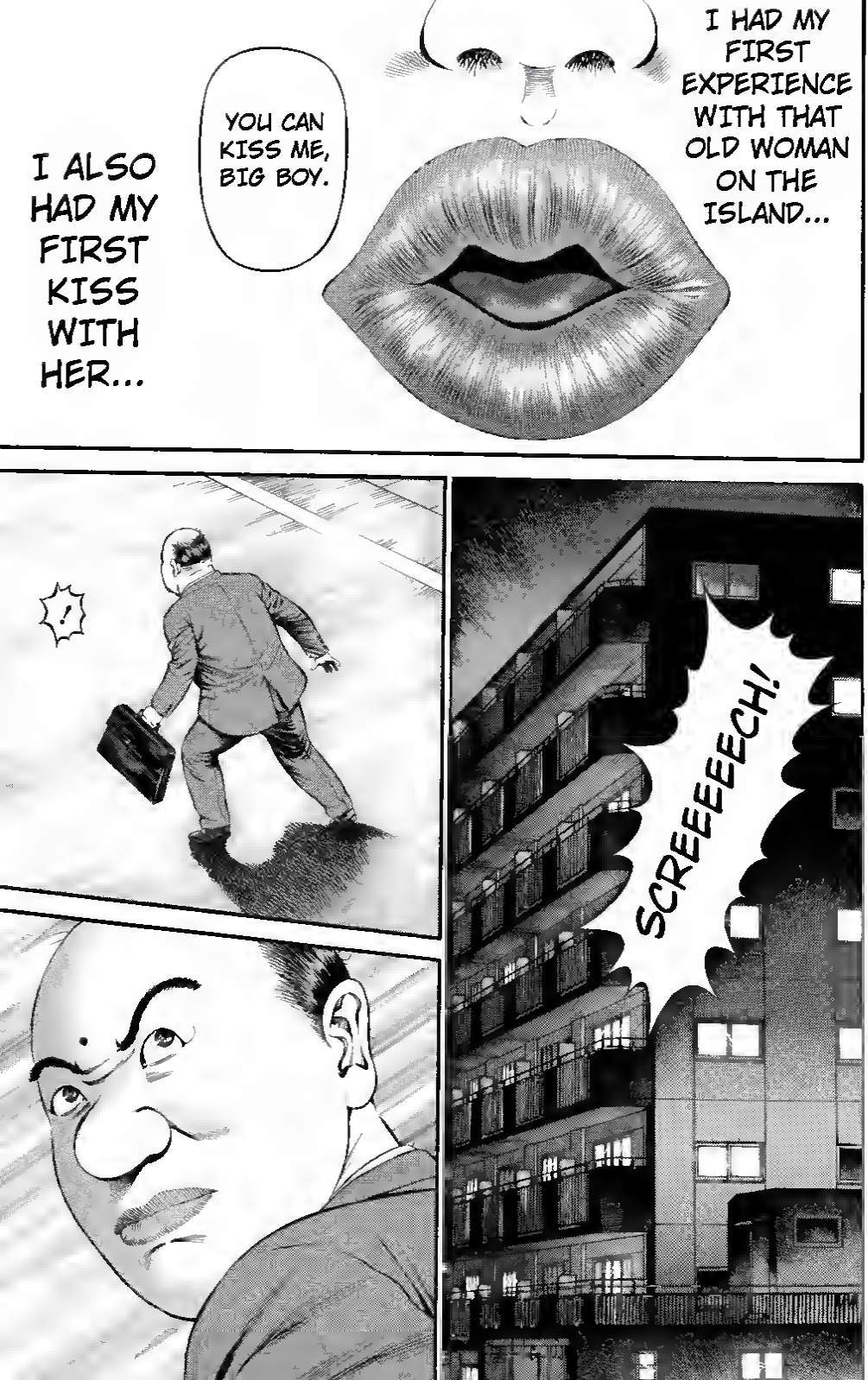
PLUS, HOW WOULD I EXPLAIN TO MY WIFE THAT I ENDED UP STAYING OVER AT THE PLACE OF A GIRL WHO'S YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE MY DAUGHTER?!
THIS KIND OF TROUBLE IS TABOO FOR A SALARYMAN LIKE ME...

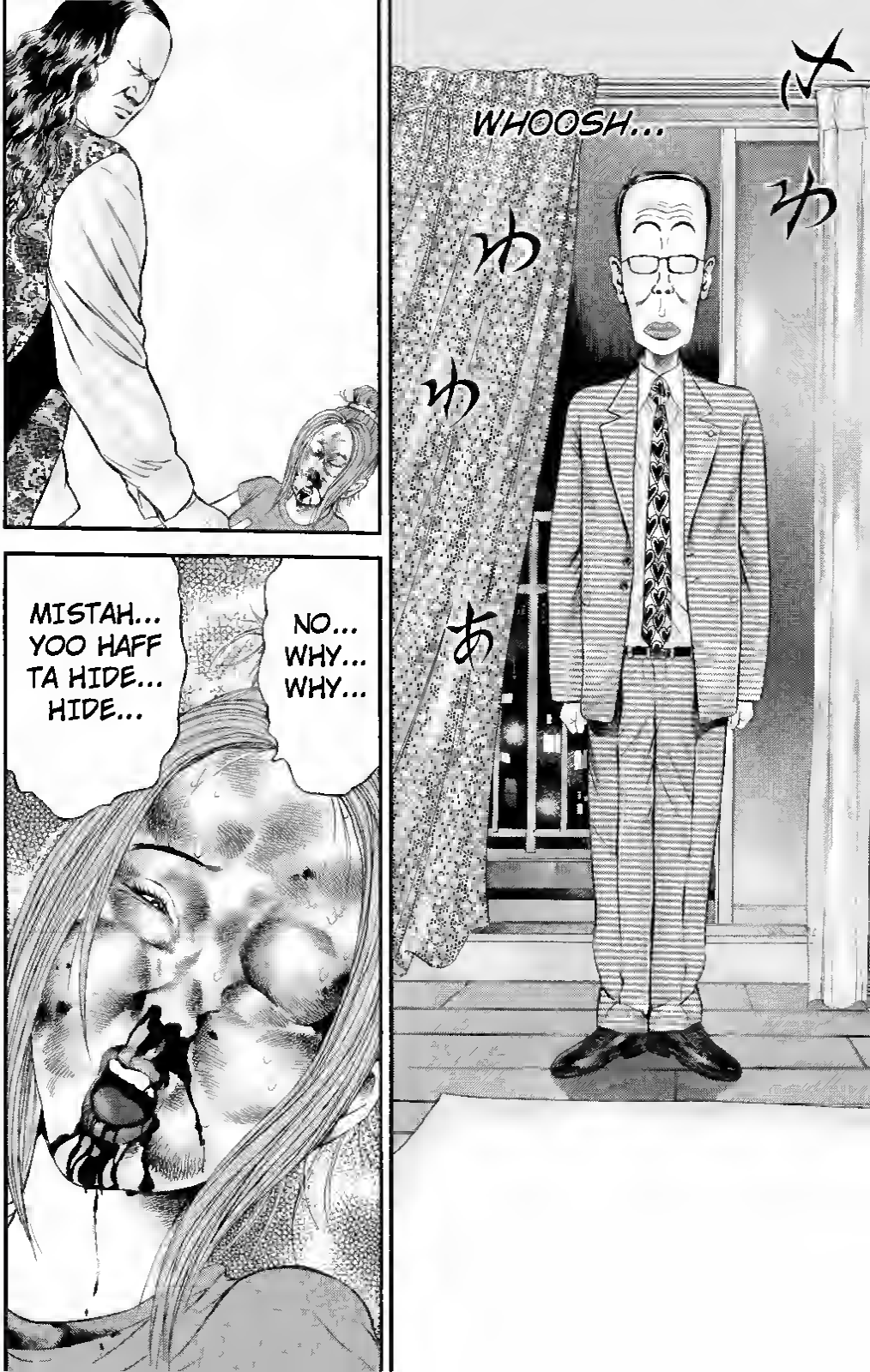

AND I CAN'T CALL THE POLICE...
HOW AM I GONNA EXPLAIN THIS SITUATION?

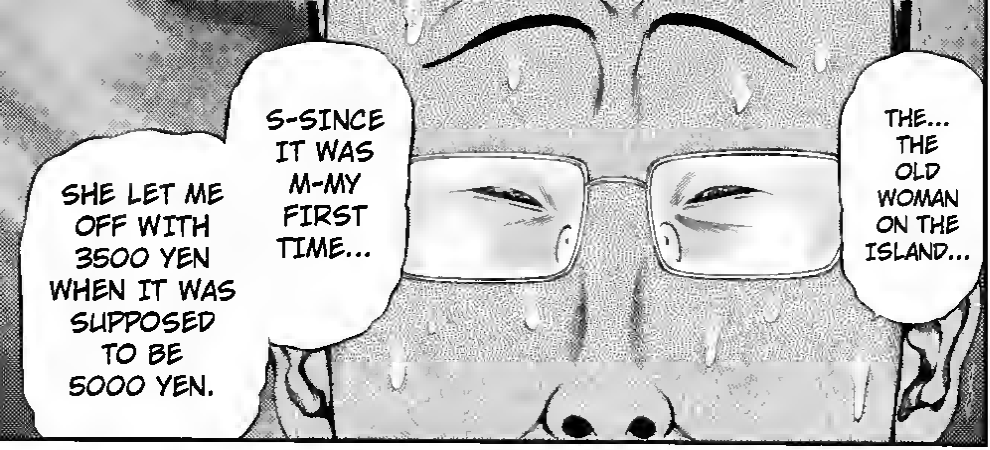
WHIMPER.
SOB ...

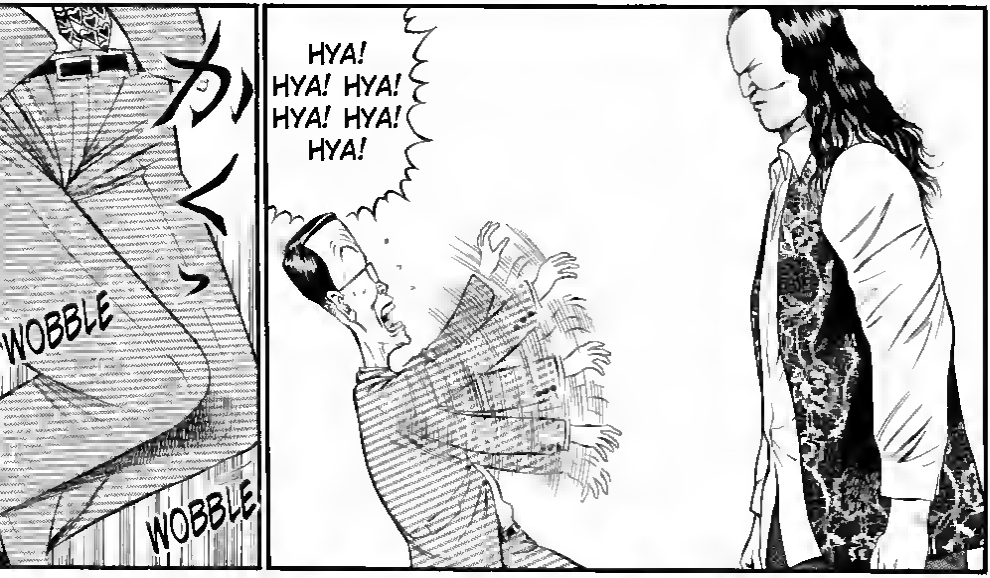
IT DOESN'T MATTER... THIS DOESN'T INVOLVE ME.
SHE CHOSE TO BE WITH A STRANGE MAN, SO SHE BROUGHT IT ON HERSELF.

YOU CAN KISS ME, MISTER!


I ALSO HAD MY FIRST KISS WITH HER...
YOU CAN KISS ME, BIG BOY.
I HAD MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH THAT OLD WOMAN ON THE ISLAND...
!
SCREEEEECH!

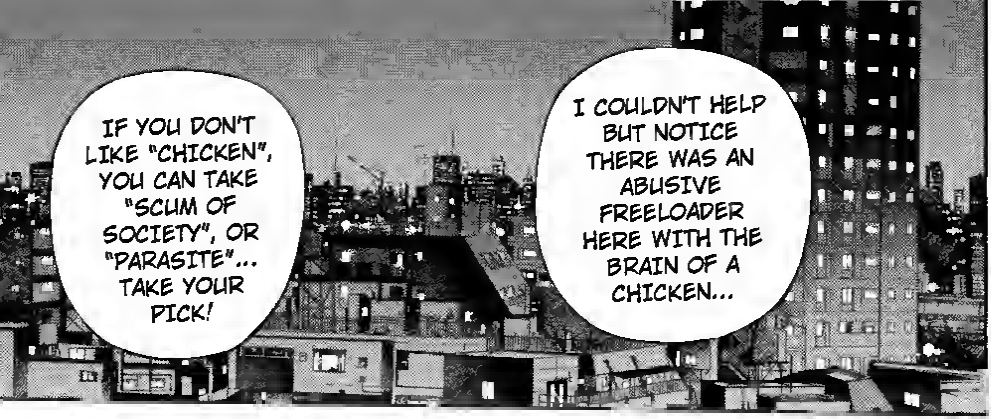

WHOOSH...
NO... WHY... WHY...
MISTAH... YOO HAFF TA HIDE... HIDE...

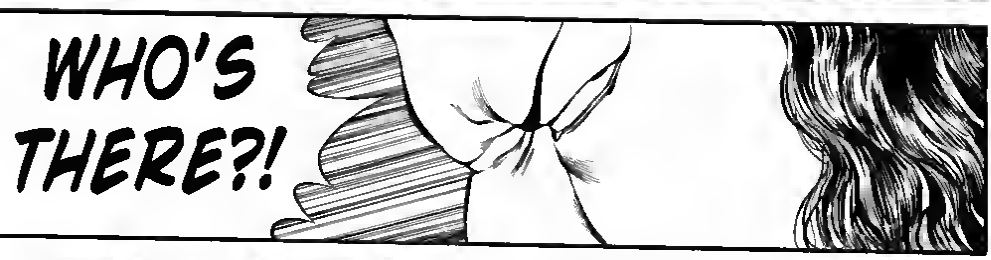

THE... THE OLD WOMAN ON THE ISLAND...
S-SINCE IT WAS M-MY FIRST TIME...
SHE LET ME OFF WITH 3500 YEN WHEN IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE 5000 YEN.


HYA! HYA! HYA! HYA! HYA!
WOBBLE
WOBBLE

THUD!
BAM!

NO, TAKUN ...
HE'Z... HE'Z NOT INVOLVED IN THIZ ...
OOH! I CAN SQUEEZE A LOT OF MONEY OUT OF THIS CHUMP! THIS'LL BE GOOD!
BATAFU FOODS... CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER.
YOU BRING OVER AN OLD MAN LIKE THIS WHEN I NEED YOU AT WORK...
GURGLE! GURGLE! GURGLE!
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
CRUSH!
YOU DISGUST ME!


IF YOU DON'T LIKE "CHICKEN", YOU CAN TAKE "SCUM OF SOCIETY", OR "PARASITE"... TAKE YOUR PICK!
I COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THERE WAS AN ABUSIVE FREELOADER HERE WITH THE BRAIN OF A CHICKEN...


WHO'S THERE?!

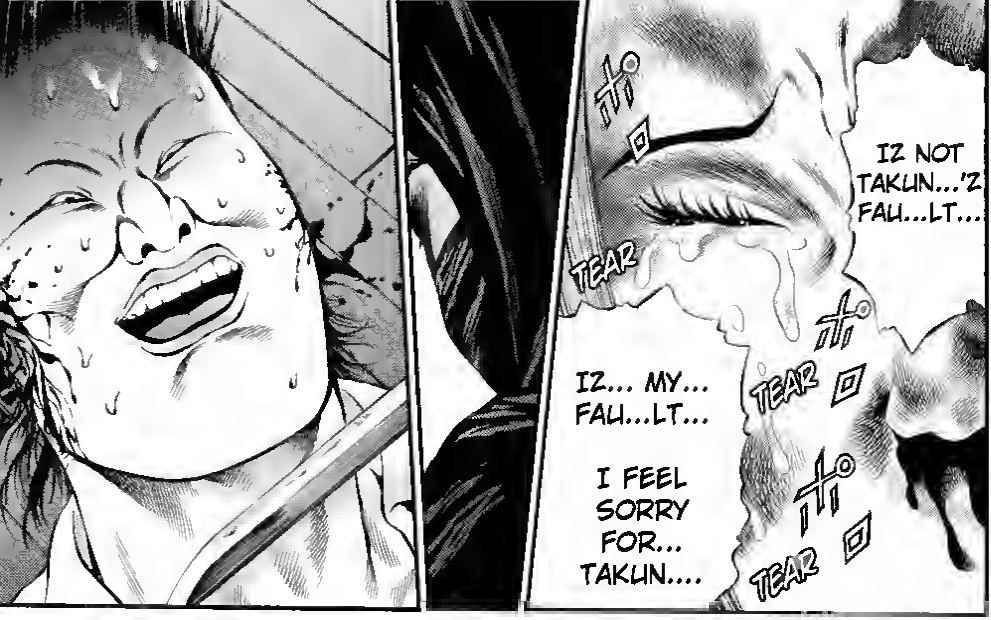
THERE IS NO CURE FOR IDIOCY.
ARGH!
WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?! COME OUT! I'M GONNA RIP YOU APART!
"NOSE DIRT"!
OR "SMEG"!
"ALL LOOKS, NO SUBSTANCE"!
"MAGGOT"!
"FLY"!
"ASSHOLE"!

AGH!
AHHH!! WHAT THE HELL?!
PLOP
SLICE

LUNGE!
A NINJA?!
DON'T THINK I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU ALONE AFTER PISSING ME OFF!!!
HEY CHICKEN BRAIN, I'M OVER HERE!
AH!!
YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE THING THAT DISGUSTS ME!

OVER HERE, NUMB SKULL.
ARGH!
I'M GONNA KILL YOU!
ARGH!
JUST LOOKING AT SCUM LIKE YOU MAKES ME WANT TO PUKE!
あ
あ
AHHH!!
あ

PULL
NOOOO!!!
PL...EASE... NIN...JA... DON'... KILL HI...M...
PLEASE S..TOP... DON'... KILL HIM...


IZ NOT TAKUN...'Z FAU...LT...
TEAR
IZ... MY... FAU...LT...
I FEEL SORRY FOR... TAKUN....
TEAR
TEAR

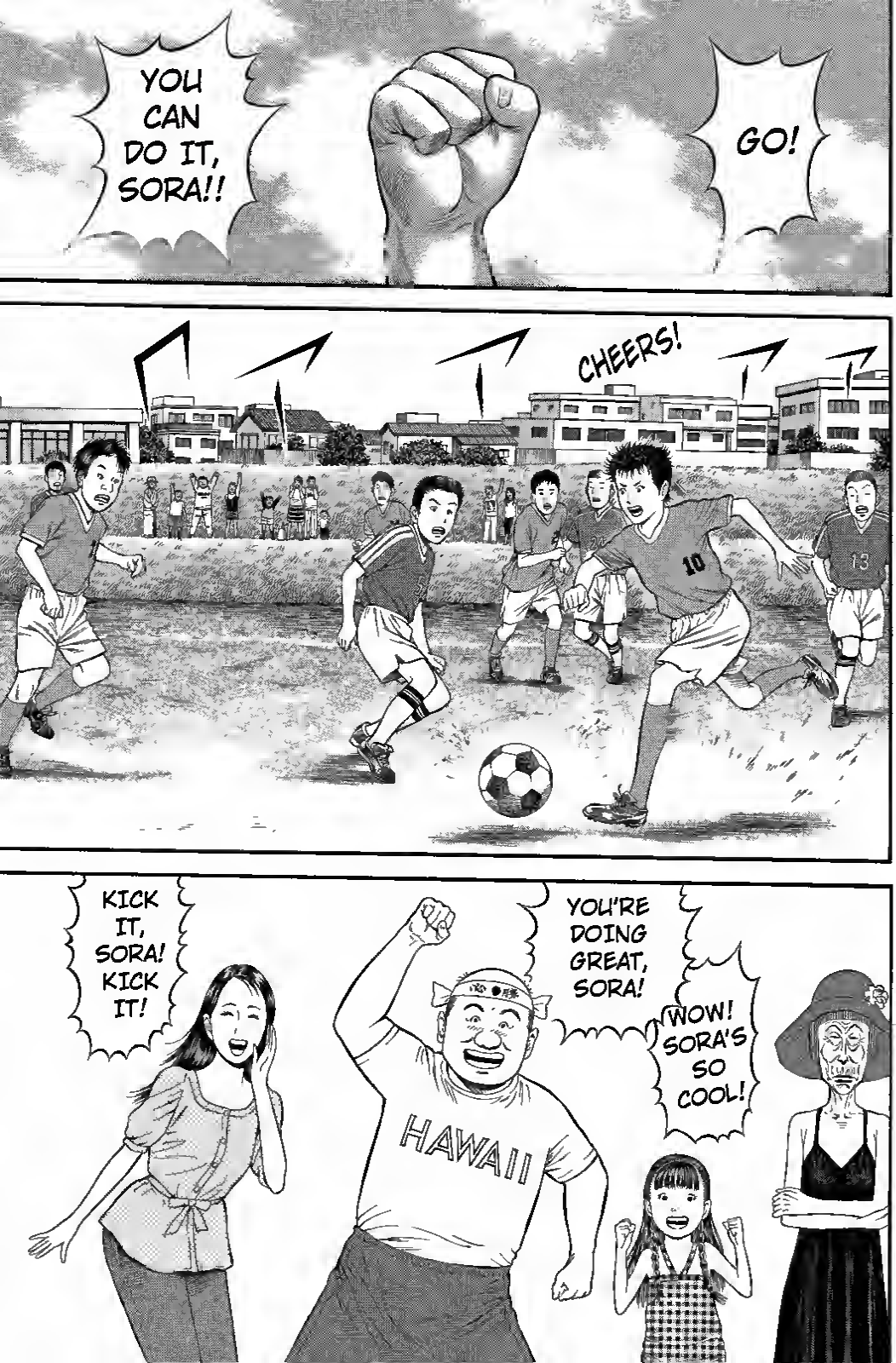
SUCH FOOLISH ...
... LOVE.

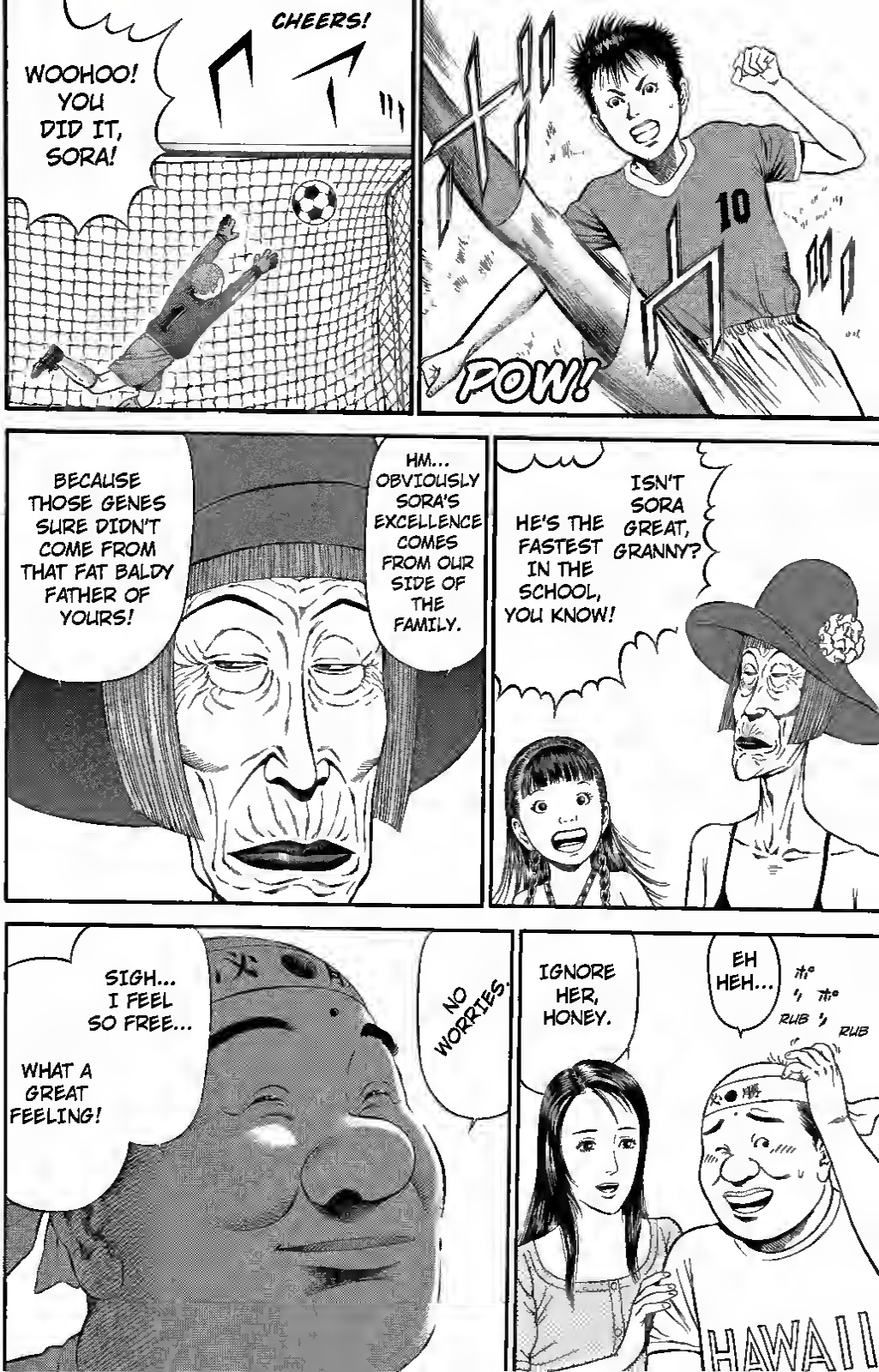
SOB
SOB
.....
GET UP
GASP
!
HUH?

DAT MAN SAID YOU'LL WAKE UP AFTER AWHILE, SO IZ GONNA BE OKAY...
I'LL WORK... EXTRA HARD... OKAY?
TAKUN... I'M SORRY... SO SORRY...
I DID ALL THAT ...?!
I...
WELL, WELL! IN THE END, IT LOOKS LIKE I CAN BE PRETTY CONFIDENT, AFTER ALL!
CHUCKLE.

I NEVER DID THANK HER...
THAT TIME... WHEN THAT OLD WOMAN STOOD THERE ALL ALONE, SEEING ME OFF OF THAT ISLAND...

IS THAT LOVE, TOO ...?
LOVE THAT ONLY LEADS TO PAIN...
FOOLISH LOVE...
.....
THE 24TH SHINOBI ✕ END

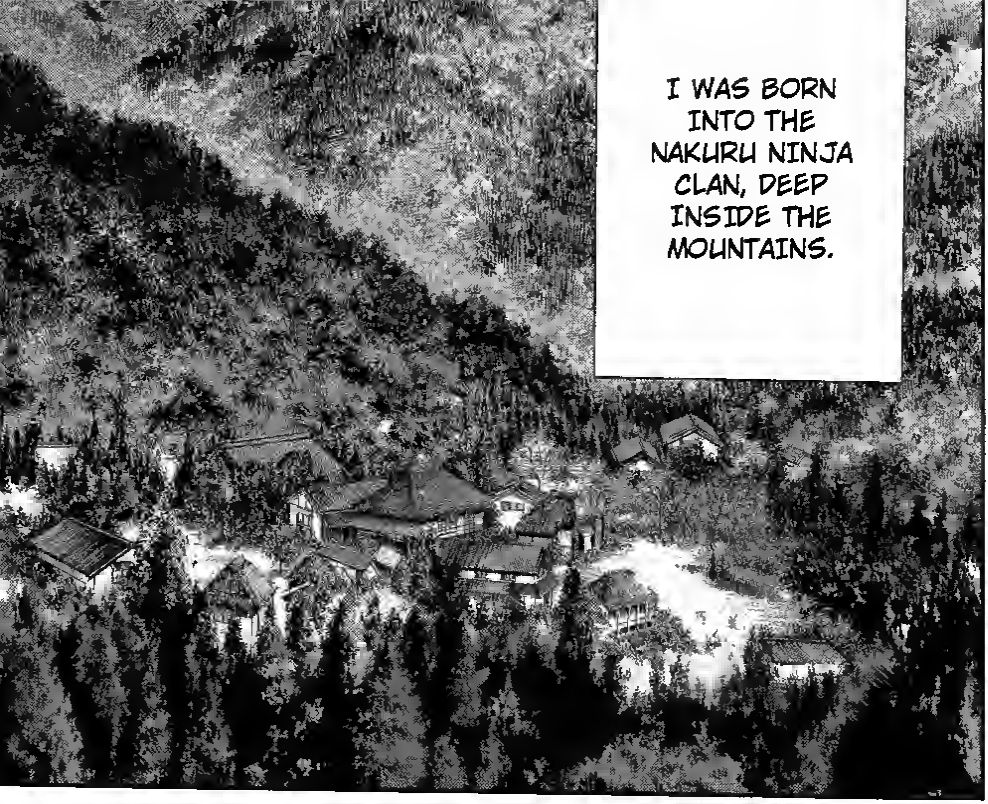

YOU CAN DO IT, SORA!!
GO!
CHEERS!
10
13
KICK IT, SORA! KICK IT!
HAWAII
YOU'RE DOING GREAT, SORA!
WOW! SORA'S SO COOL!


CHEERS!
WOOHOO! YOU DID IT, SORA!
10
POW!
BECAUSE THOSE GENES SURE DIDN'T COME FROM THAT FAT BALDY FATHER OF YOURS!
HM... OBVIOUSLY SORA'S EXCELLENCE COMES FROM OUR SIDE OF THE FAMILY.
ISN'T SORA GREAT, GRANNY?
HE'S THE FASTEST IN THE SCHOOL, YOU KNOW!
SIGH... I FEEL SO FREE...
WHAT A GREAT FEELING!
NO WORRIES.
IGNORE HER, HONEY.
EH HEH...
RUB
RUB
HAWAII

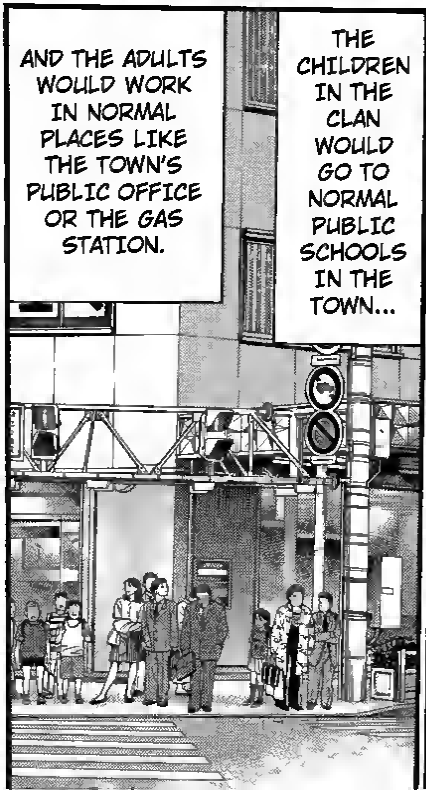
SOMETHING THE MATTER, HONEY?
OH... NO...
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT A LONG TIME AGO... SOME SENTIMENTAL THOUGHTS, THAT'S ALL...
A LONG TIME AGO ...
HEY! LOOK! LOOK!
IT'S A WHITE DOVE!
IT'S SO PRETTY!
!
AWAII

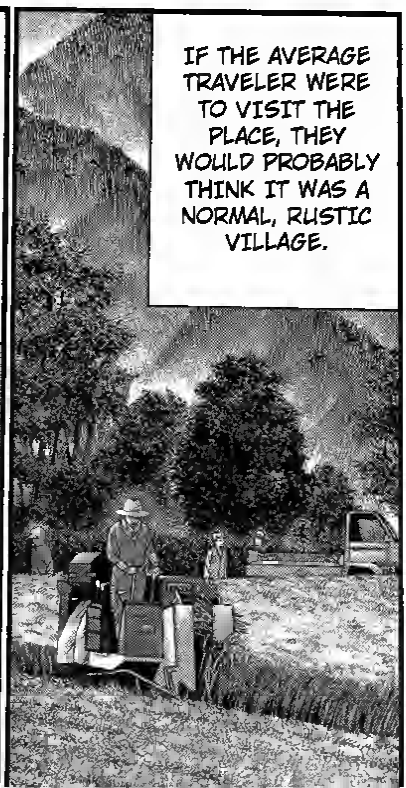
THE 25TH SHINOBI: "THE CAGED DOVE"

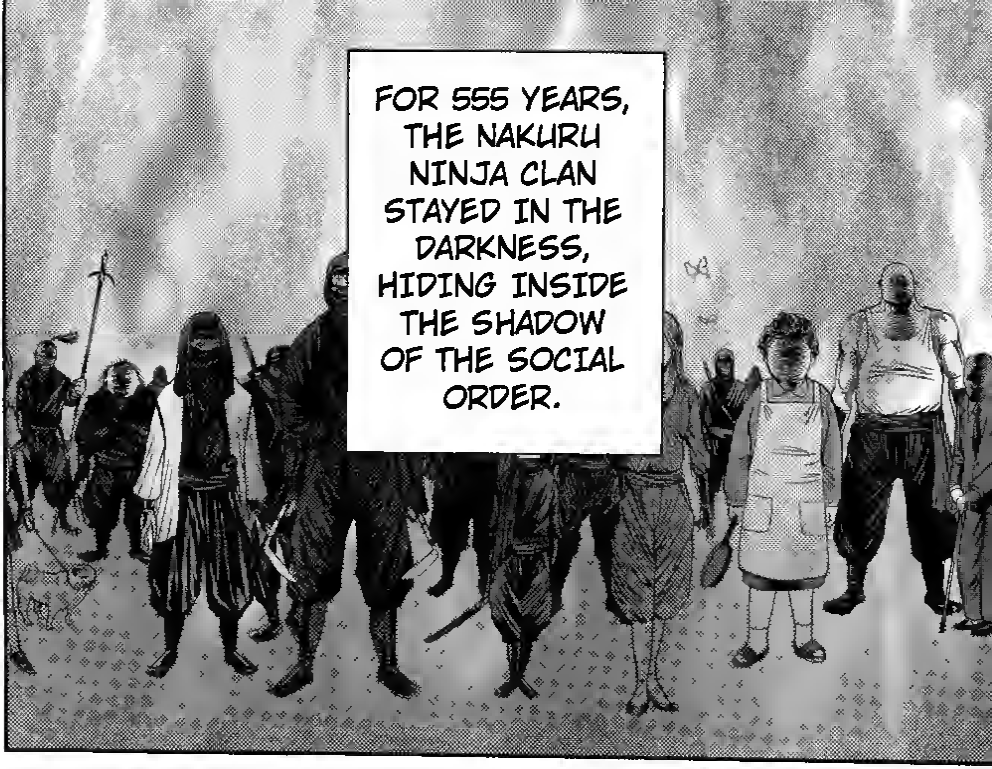
BACK THEN, I WAS IN A PLACE THAT WAS FAR, FAR REMOVED FROM FREEDOM.


I WAS BORN INTO THE NAKURU NINJA CLAN, DEEP INSIDE THE MOUNTAINS.

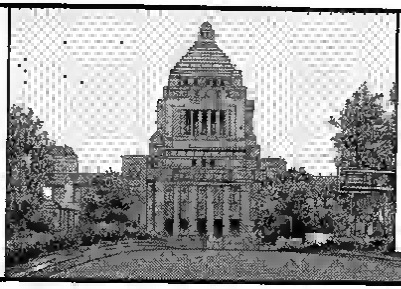
HOWEVER...


AND THE ADULTS WOULD WORK IN NORMAL PLACES LIKE THE TOWN'S PUBLIC OFFICE OR THE GAS STATION.
THE CHILDREN IN THE CLAN WOULD GO TO NORMAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE TOWN...


IF THE AVERAGE TRAVELER WERE TO VISIT THE PLACE, THEY WOULD PROBABLY THINK IT WAS A NORMAL, RUSTIC VILLAGE.

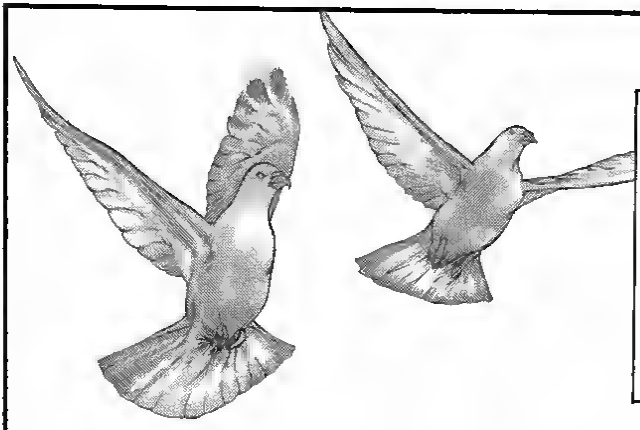


ONE MUST PERFECTLY EXECUTE THE ORDERS GIVEN BY THE LEADER AT THAT TIME... AND THE POWER OF DARKNESS WAS HELD BY THE HEAD OF THE CLAN.



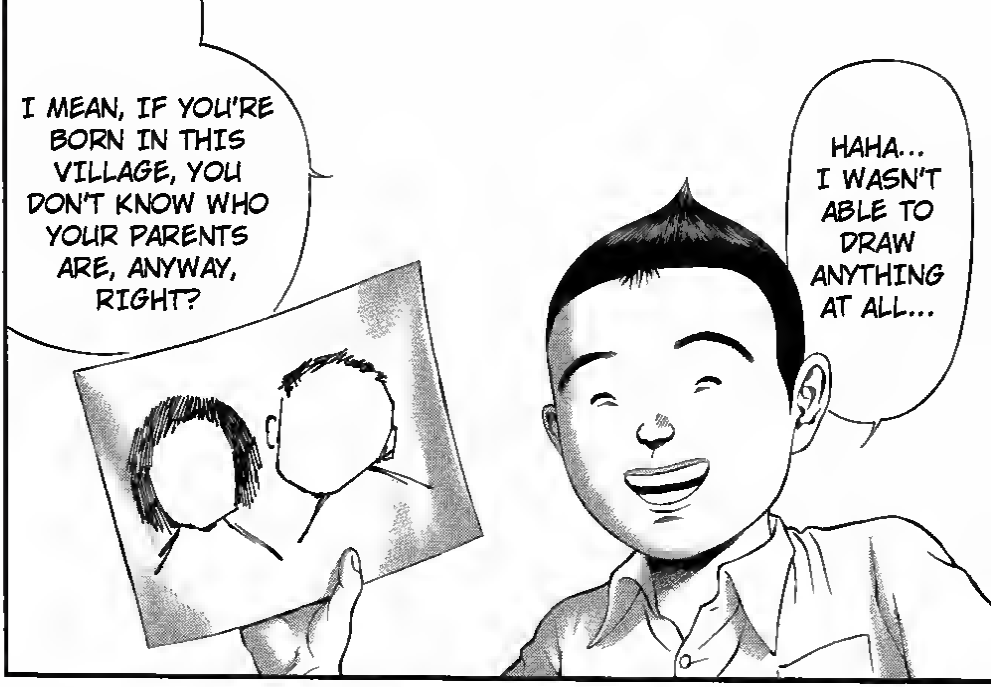
HERE, THE CLAN LIVED BY THE IRON LAW:

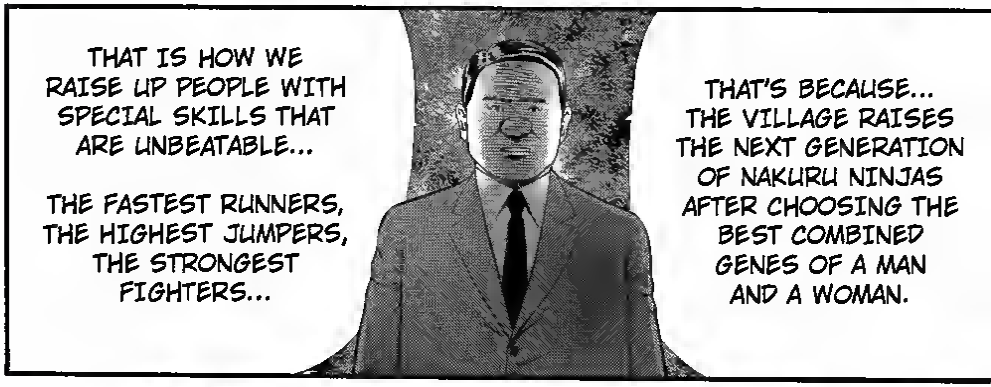
ONE MUST NEVER LEAVE THE CLAN...

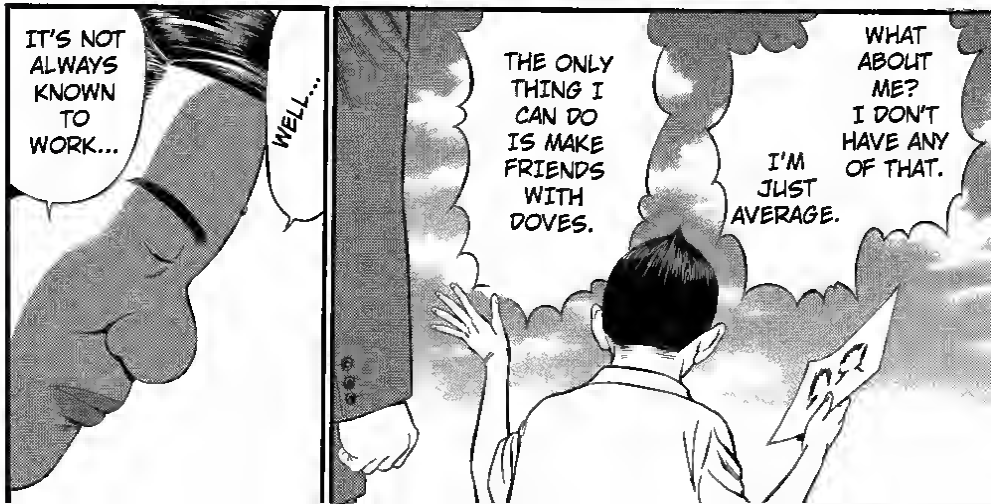


THE MOMENT ONE WAS BORN INTO THIS CLAN, A LIFE OF FREEDOM WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION.

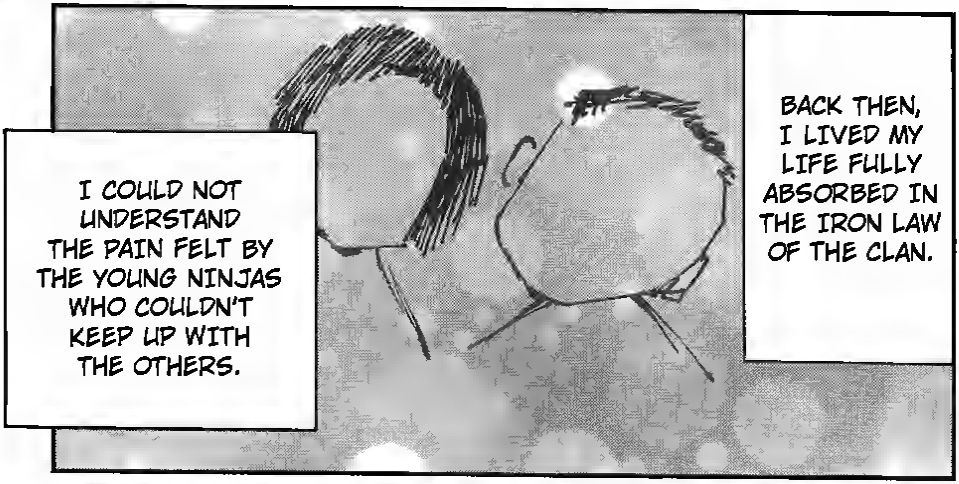
MARUKO... I HEARD THAT YOU SKIPPED SCHOOL.
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
POPPO! CUCKOO! YOU TWO ARE SO CUTE!
AHAHAHA!
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SICK.
TELL ME WHY.
YOU'RE BACK FROM THE OFFICE!
OH, NOBUO!
COO!
.....
THEY'D TOLD US TO DRAW A PICTURE OF OUR PARENTS' FACES FOR HOMEWORK.
HAHA...
THIS... IS SOMETHING I DREW WHEN I WAS IN THE SECOND GRADE.
YOU KNOW, NOBUO ...
MARUKO!


I MEAN, IF YOU'RE BORN IN THIS VILLAGE, YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOUR PARENTS ARE, ANYWAY, RIGHT?
HAHA... I WASN'T ABLE TO DRAW ANYTHING AT ALL...


THAT IS HOW WE RAISE UP PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL SKILLS THAT ARE UNBEATABLE...
THE FASTEST RUNNERS, THE HIGHEST JUMPERS, THE STRONGEST FIGHTERS...
THAT'S BECAUSE... THE VILLAGE RAISES THE NEXT GENERATION OF NAKURU NINJAS AFTER CHOOSING THE BEST COMBINED GENES OF A MAN AND A WOMAN.


IT'S NOT ALWAYS KNOWN TO WORK...
WELL...
THE ONLY THING I CAN DO IS MAKE FRIENDS WITH DOVES.
I'M JUST AVERAGE.
WHAT ABOUT ME? I DON'T HAVE ANY OF THAT.

I DON'T THINK I'M MEANT TO BE A NINJA...
MARUKO...
DON'T YOU DARE MENTION THAT TO ANYONE ELSE...


BACK THEN, I LIVED MY LIFE FULLY ABSORBED IN THE IRON LAW OF THE CLAN.
I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE PAIN FELT BY THE YOUNG NINJAS WHO COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH THE OTHERS.

DON'T YOU KNOW YOU'RE ATTACKING ME, AKAI OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY?!
STOP! A NINJA ?!
MARUKO... EVEN YOU CAN DO THIS.
TOMORROW, THE NEWS WILL SAY THAT HE COMMITTED SUICIDE.
MARUKO, YOU KILL HIM.
YOU CAN JUST THROW HIM OFF THE BALCONY.
DON'T JOKE AROUND! WHO PUT YOU UP TO THIS ?!
WH-WHAT ?!

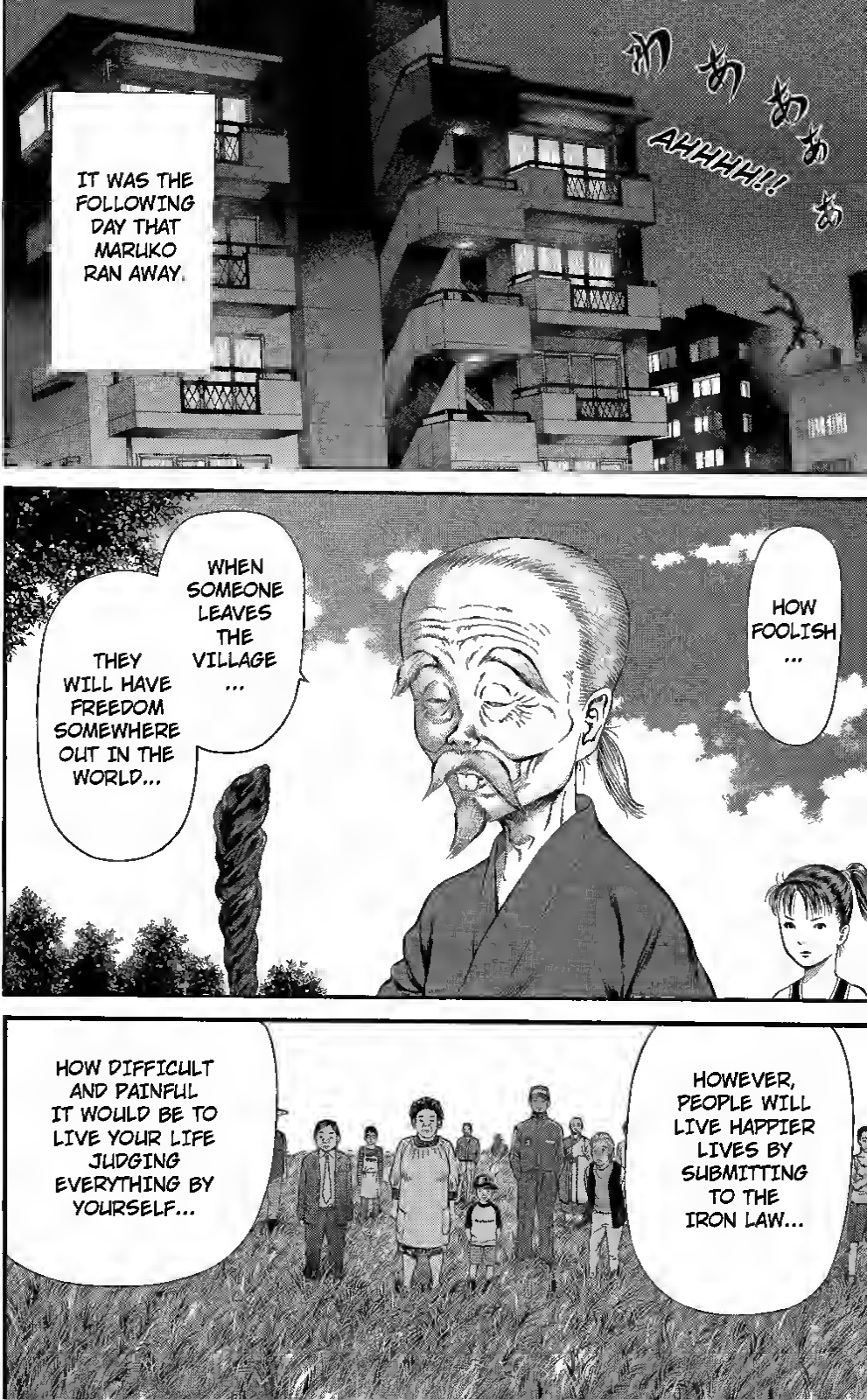
I'M DIFFERENT FROM YOU!!
N-NO!!
MARUKO!

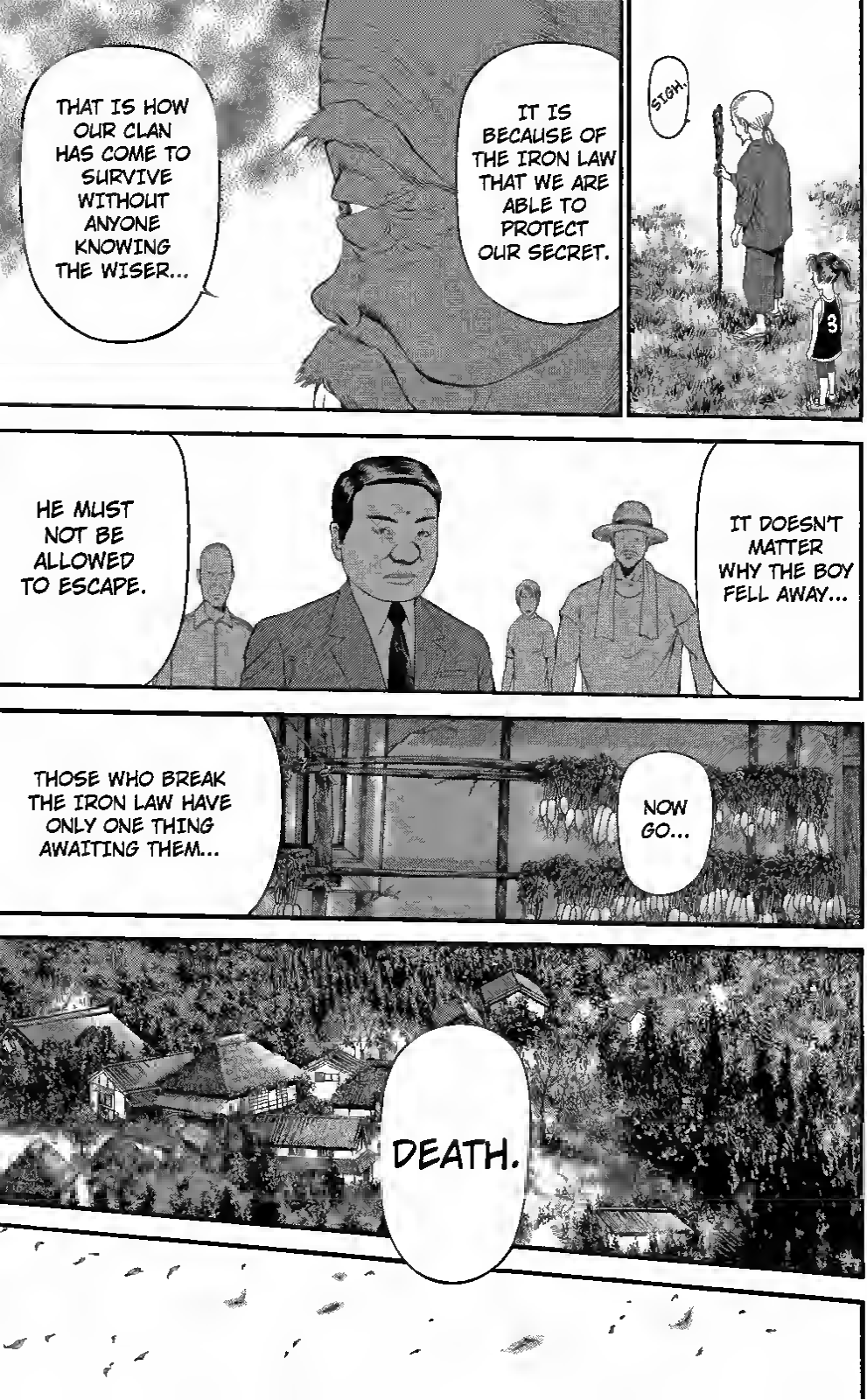
I'M NOT LIKE YOU! I COULD NEVER KILL MY REAL BROTHER TO SURVIVE!!

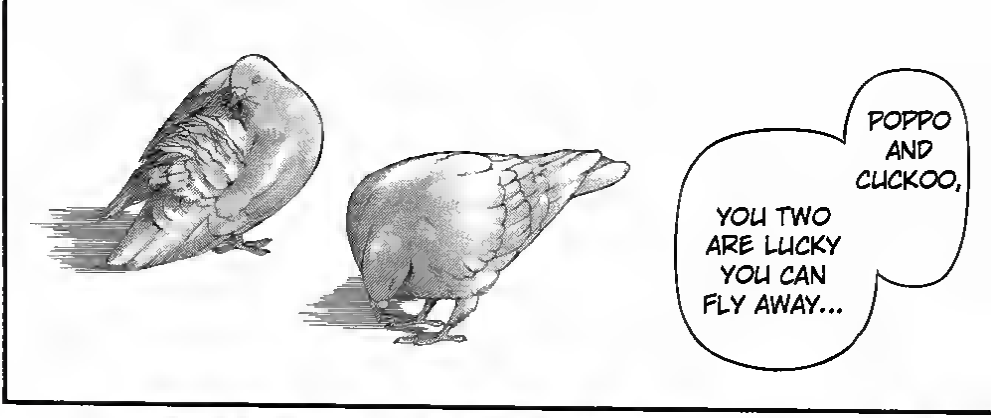
MARUKO...

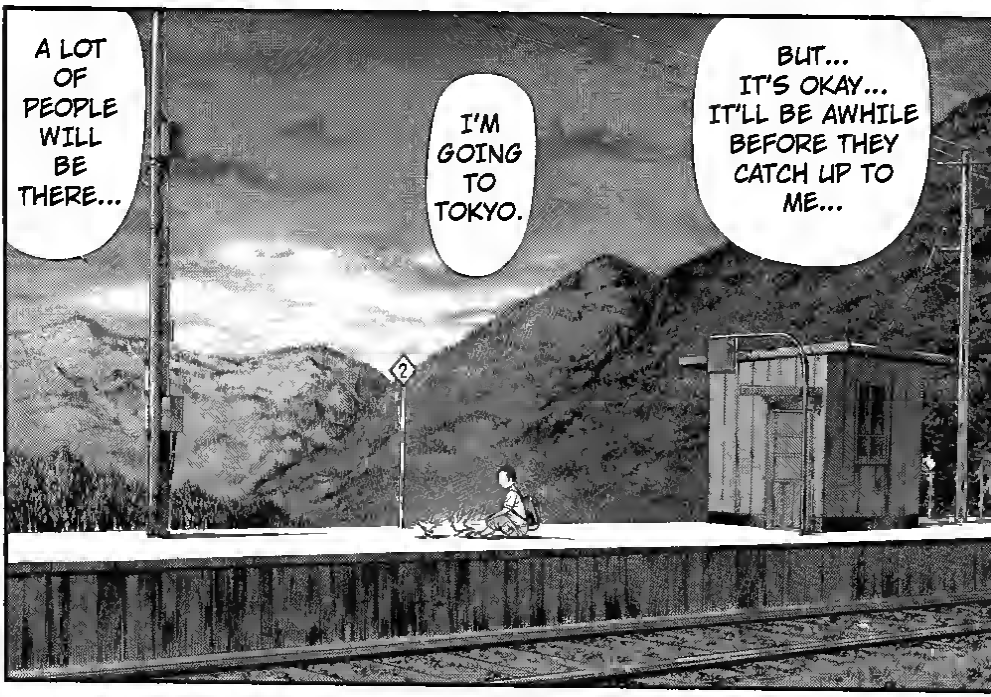
YEAH! H-HOW ABOUT I SETTLE THIS WITH A LARGE SUM OF MONEY AND WE FORGET ABOUT THE WHOLE THING!
UHH... WH-WHAT AN HONORABLE NINJA!!

SOB!
I'M SORRY! I JUST CAN'T! I'M SORRY!

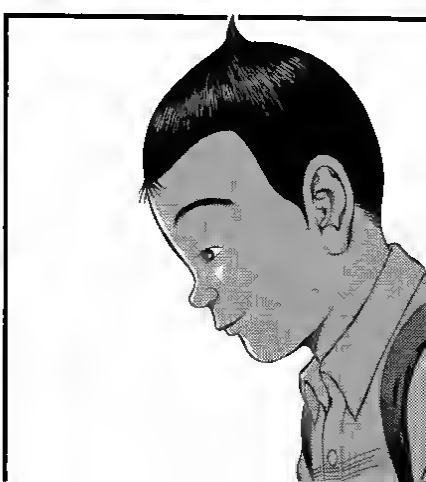

IT WAS THE FOLLOWING DAY THAT MARUKO RAN AWAY.
AHHHH!!
HOW FOOLISH ...
WHEN SOMEONE LEAVES THE VILLAGE ...
THEY WILL HAVE FREEDOM SOMEWHERE OUT IN THE WORLD...
HOW DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL IT WOULD BE TO LIVE YOUR LIFE JUDGING EVERYTHING BY YOURSELF...
HOWEVER, PEOPLE WILL LIVE HAPPIER LIVES BY SUBMITTING TO THE IRON LAW...


THAT IS HOW OUR CLAN HAS COME TO SURVIVE WITHOUT ANYONE KNOWING THE WISER...
IT IS BECAUSE OF THE IRON LAW THAT WE ARE ABLE TO PROTECT OUR SECRET.
SIGH.
HE MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO ESCAPE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHY THE BOY FELL AWAY...
THOSE WHO BREAK THE IRON LAW HAVE ONLY ONE THING AWAITING THEM...
NOW GO...
DEATH.


POPPO AND CUCKOO,
YOU TWO ARE LUCKY YOU CAN FLY AWAY...


A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL BE THERE...
I'M GOING TO TOKYO.
BUT... IT'S OKAY... IT'LL BE AWHILE BEFORE THEY CATCH UP TO ME...
12

IT'S NO USE...
SIGH...

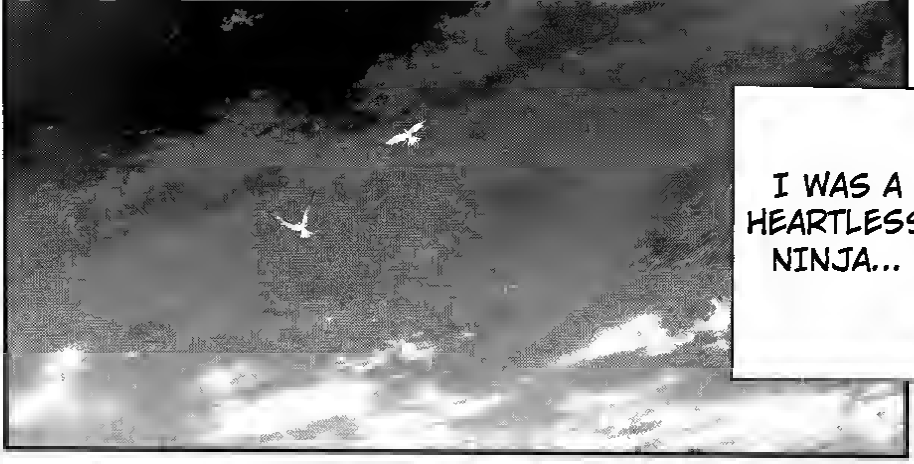


SEE NOT THE ENEMY BEFORE YOUR EYES...
AND THE PATH OF CARELESS-NESS BEFORE YOU LIES...
NOBUO, I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE.
I WAS BORN IN THE WRONG PLACE.
IT IS THE LAW,
MARUKO.

FLAP!
FLAP!
FLAP!
FLAP!
FLAP!
FLAP!
FLAP!
FLAP!
FLAP!
FLAP!
CUCKOO!!
GOOD JOB, POPPO !!
FLAP!
ARGH!
FLAP!

HYAH!
SWOOSH!
FWIP!
M-MARUKO ... I WILL FINISH YOU HERE ...
STAB

MARUKO,
YOU PUT UP A FIGHT.
IF I HAD YOUR SKILL, THAT WOULD'VE BEEN AN EASY ONE...
HAHA... YOU COULD'VE DODGED THAT ONE, RIGHT, NOBUO?
NOW... I CAN BE FREE...
BUT... THANK YOU...
SLASH!


I WAS A HEARTLESS NINJA...

UNTIL THE DAY I MET AYA...
THE 25TH SHINOBI X END

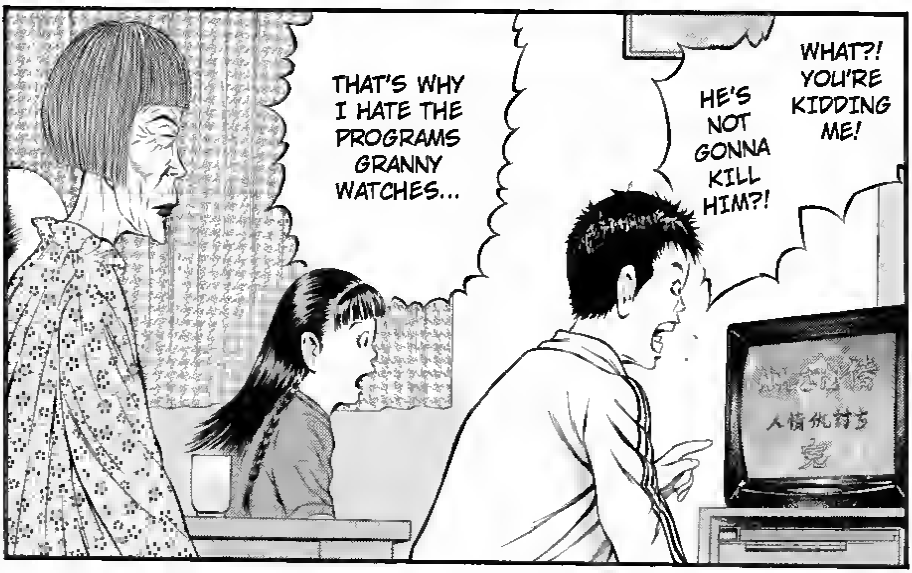
NO! WAIT! DON'T! FORGIVE ME!
I WILL AVENGE MY PARENTS! PREPARE TO DIE!

I'M GONNA BECOME A GOOD, HONEST PERSON, I SWEAR!
I'LL TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT MY LIFE!

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SUNSET.

SIGH.

OUT OF RESPECT FOR THIS SUNSET, I WILL FORGIVE YOU.
I WILL NOT KILL YOU...
BAWL! TH-THANK YOU SO MUCH!

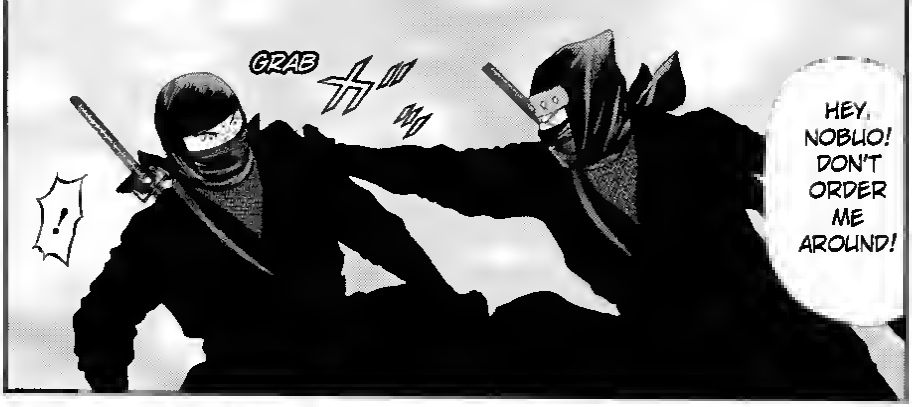

WHAT?! YOU'RE KIDDING ME!
HE'S NOT GONNA KILL HIM?!
THAT'S WHY I HATE THE PROGRAMS GRANNY WATCHES...

HERE, HONEY. HAVE A TOWEL.
HUH?
SNIFF...
SNIFF...
SNIFF...

THE 26TH SHINOBI: "ENCOUNTER"

BUT WASN'T THAT A BEAUTIFUL STORY...?
HOW HONORABLE ...
TO NOT KILL YOUR ENEMY...
NO WAY! PERIOD DRAMAS ARE BORING IF THERE'S NO SLICING OF BODIES!
WITH THE EYES ROLLED BACK AND THE BLOOD SPLATTERING EVERYWHERE!
BAWL!!
STILL... YOUR FATHER DOESN'T LIKE WATCHING PEOPLE GET KILLED EVEN IF IT'S IN A DRAMA...
I THINK THAT'S WONDERFUL OF YOUR FATHER.
HE'S NOT KIND-HEARTED, HE'S FAINT-HEARTED ...
A MAN THAT CAN'T KILL A COCKROACH IS WORSE THAN A PILE OF POOP!
SCOFF!

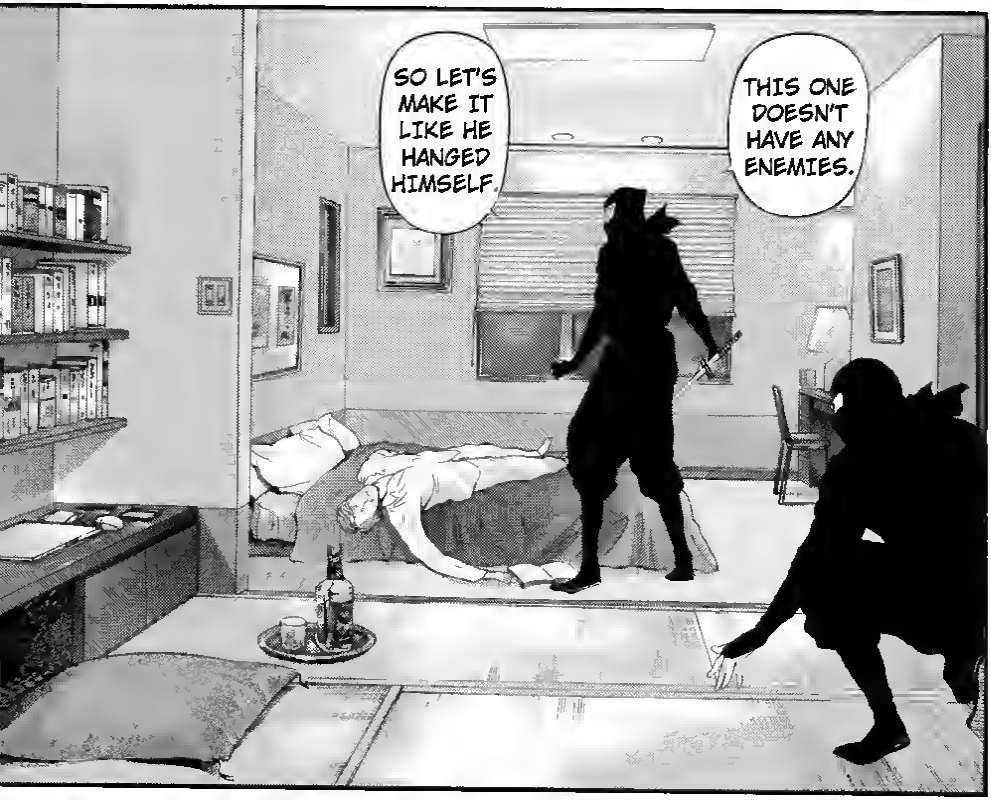
I HAD ONCE BEEN A HEARTLESS NINJA.
ON THAT DAY, 11 YEARS AGO...
ONIMARU AND I WERE INSTRUCTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSASSINATE A JOURNALIST WHO HELD INFORMATION THAT WAS UNFAVORABLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT.
DON'T GET CARELESS, NOW, ONIMARU.
KEKEKE! I COULD DO IT WITH MY EYES CLOSED.
TSK... THIS JOB IS SUCH A CINCH, IT'S BORING.


GRAB
!
HEY, NOBUO! DON'T ORDER ME AROUND!

YET, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT OUR NAKURU CLAN CALLS "ACE".
I DON'T LIKE IT! NOT ONE BIT!
YOU AND I ARE THE SAME AGE, AND WE'RE EQUALS...

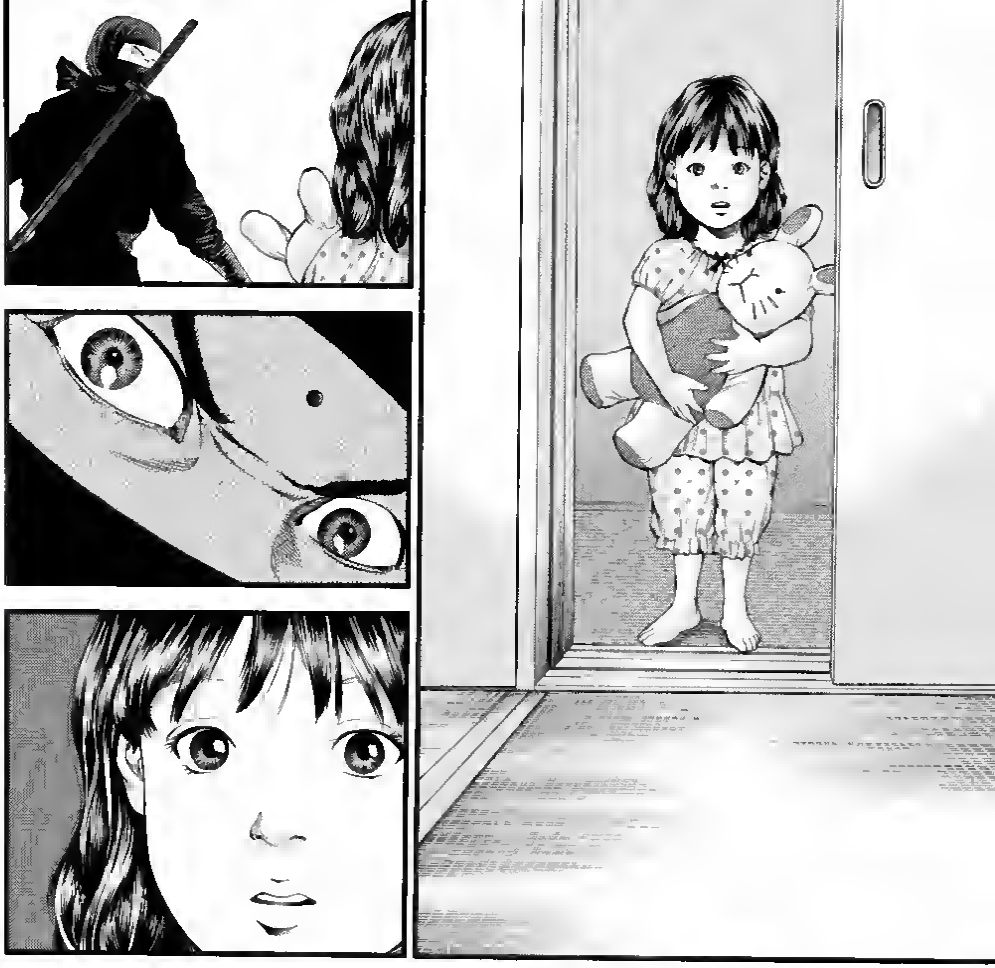
STRANGELY, THERE WAS SOMETHING OFF ABOUT ME THAT NIGHT...
BUT...
TO BE SURE, THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AN EASY TASK...

GROAN...


SO LET'S MAKE IT LIKE HE HANGED HIMSELF.
THIS ONE DOESN'T HAVE ANY ENEMIES.

GASP!

SLIDE...



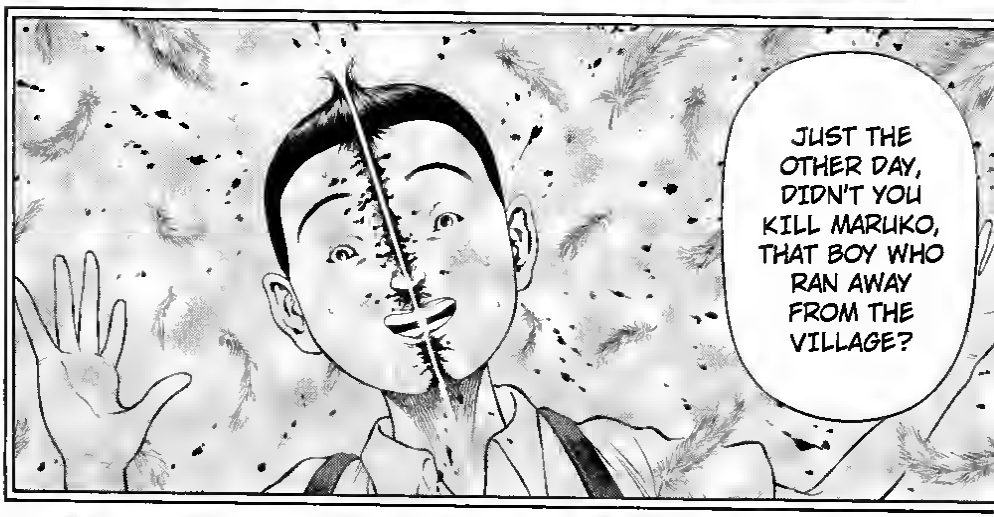
TSK TSK... THE ENTIRE FAMILY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ASLEEP.
LOOKS LIKE A LITTLE BRAT CAUGHT US IN THE ACT.
NO MATTER. KEKEKE.
SINCE SHE SAW US, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO KILL BOTH THE GIRL AND HER DADDY.

KEKEKE! WE'LL KILL EVERYONE IN A JOINT "FAMILY SUICIDE"!
CHANGE OF PLANS!

BACK OFF!
GRAE
TOUCH

WE FAILED THE MISSION TONIGHT.
WE TRY AGAIN NEXT TIME!
GLARE
WHAT THE HELL, NOBUO ?!

!
KEKEKE
AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE HEARTLESS, NOBUO?


JUST THE OTHER DAY, DIDN'T YOU KILL MARUKO, THAT BOY WHO RAN AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE?

NO...
IN ANY CASE, DON'T KILL CHILDREN.

MARUKO... WANTED TO SEE HIS PARENTS' FACE...
I.....
I MAY HAVE MADE A... MISTAKE...

SWING!
DON'T ORDER ME AROUND!!
STOP IT, ONIMARU!
CLANG!
!
DADDY!!
WAHHHH!

ONIMARU!!
I'M GONNA REPORT TONIGHT'S INCIDENT TO KASHIRA!
BUT BEFORE I DO, LET'S DECIDE THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL, NOBUO!

THIS IS FUTILE BETWEEN FRIENDS!
I SAID STOP, ONIMARU!!
CLANG!
I'M GONNA SHOW YOU WHO'S THE BETTER NINJA!
FRIENDS?!
THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU, NOBUO!

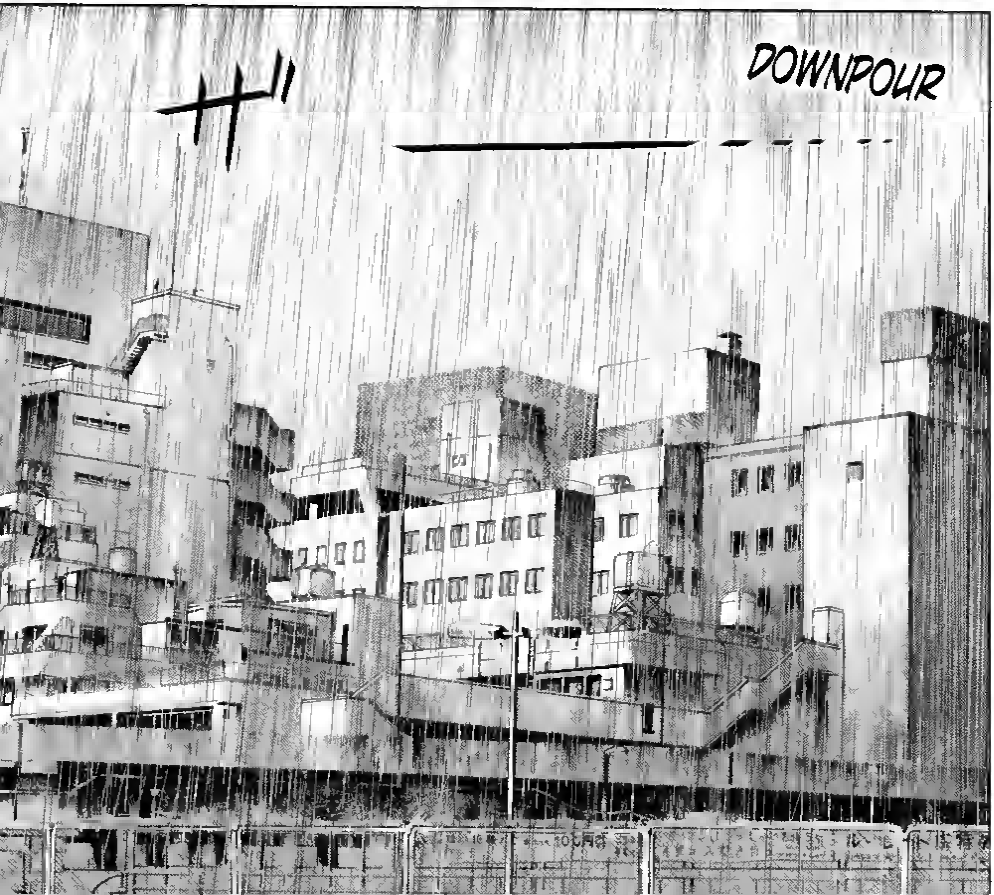
!
YOU COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT KILLING!
HELL'S FLURRY OF NEEDLES !!!

STRENGTH WAS WHAT WE WERE AFTER...
HYA!
WHOOSH!
BURST!
SLASH!
WHAT COULD THAT BE?
YOU HEARD IT, TOO, RIGHT?
RATTLE
I THINK IT'S A CAT IN HEAT...
THIS WAS THE LIFE OF AN ISOLATED NINJA...

KEKEKE! HAD THOSE NEEDLES BEEN POISONED, THIS WOULD BE MY VICTORY.
PANT
PANT

IF YOU DON'T, YOU'RE GONNA REGRET IT!
GO AHEAD! KILL ME, NOBUO.
KEKEKE!
"I WANT TO BE FREE"
WAS WHAT MARUKO SAID.
ON THAT DAY, SOMETHING ABOUT ME WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE PERSON I HAD ALWAYS BEEN.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "FREE"?
"FREE" ...


十川
DOWNPOUR

YOU'RE GONNA CATCH A COLD, MR. NINJA.

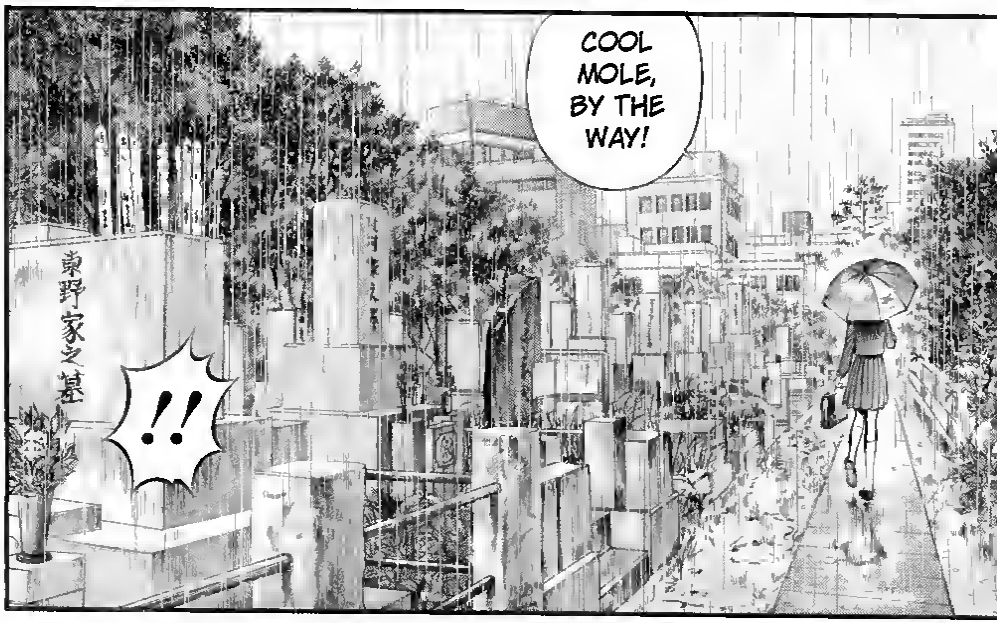
AYA SMILED.
THE 26TH SHINOBI ✕ END

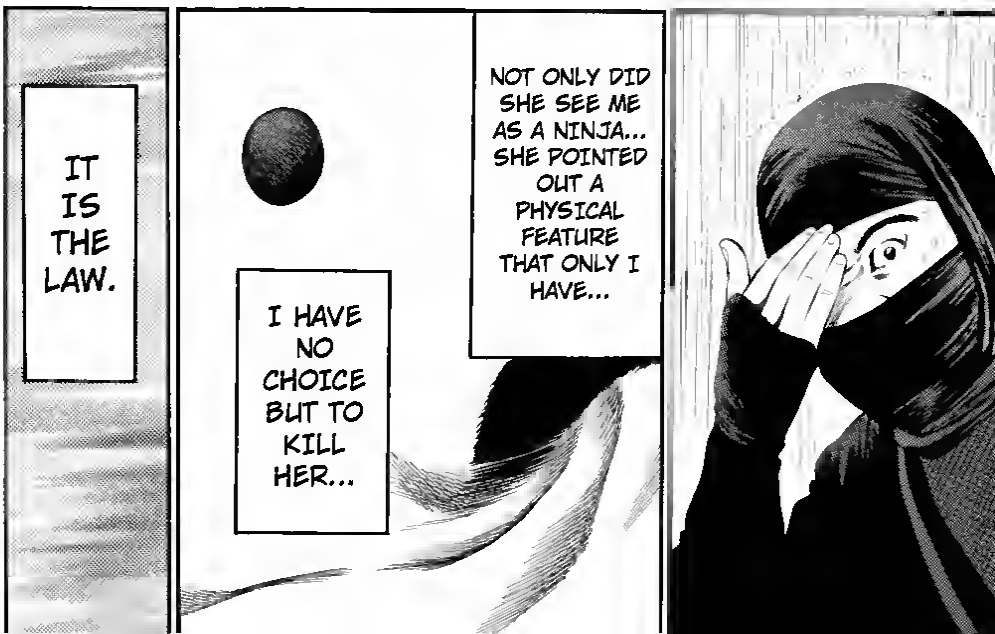
SHE SAW ME, SITTING THERE ...
YOU SURPRISED ME! I NEVER THOUGHT I'D END UP SEEING A NINJA ON MY WAY TO SCHOOL!
OH... THIS IS A SHORT CUT, YOU SEE!
I WASN'T BEING CAREFUL ...
...BUT ...

THIS IS A WONDERFUL MOMENT.
THE 27TH SHINOBI: "LOVE AT THE CEMETERY"

MEETING A NINJA JUST DOESN'T HAPPEN, YOU KNOW? EVEN IF YOU ARE BORN IN JAPAN!
SINCE...
.....
IN MY WORLD, WHERE EVERYTHING IS SO RIGID, THIS FEELS LIKE A WONDERFUL MOMENT IN TIME...
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'RE COMING BACK FROM A COSTUME PARTY...
OR DOING SOME PR STUNT...
TO ME, YOU'RE A REAL NINJA...
IT'S JUST THAT I'M... REALLY HAPPY.
SORRY FOR GOING ON AND ON BY MYSELF LIKE THIS...
I'M SUCH A DORK...

CHUCKLE.
FAREWELL, MR. NINJA!

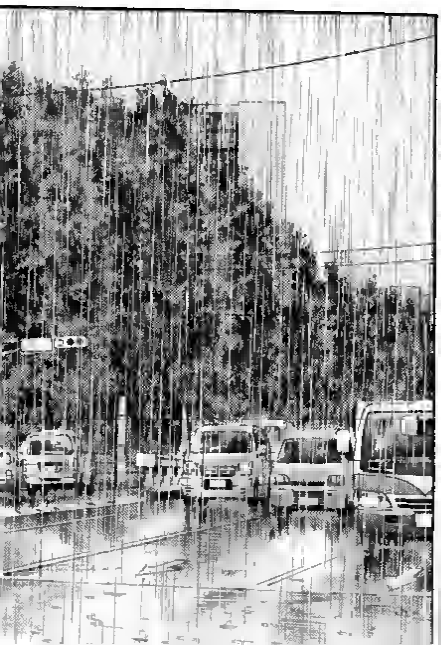

COOL MOLE, BY THE WAY!
!!
東野家之墓


IT IS THE LAW.
I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO KILL HER...
NOT ONLY DID SHE SEE ME AS A NINJA... SHE POINTED OUT A PHYSICAL FEATURE THAT ONLY I HAVE...

AS IF SHE DOESN'T FEAR ME...
AS IF ...
HER BACK IS SO... UNGUARDED ...
SHE DOES NOT SUBMIT TO THE LAW...

TURN
OH! ONE MORE THING!
I ALWAYS KEEP A PORTABLE UMBRELLA IN MY BAG, EVEN THOUGH I CAME OUT WITH A BIG UMBRELLA THIS MORNING!
I USUALLY DON'T DO SOMETHING SO UNNECESSARY ...
THIS MUST BE SOME KIND OF FATE, TOO!
IT'S OKAY! PLEASE TAKE IT!
THIS GLOOMY DAY BECAME A LOT MORE FUN THANKS TO YOU, MR. NINJA!
WELL, THEN! GOODBYE FOR REAL, THIS TIME!

SHAA!



NOBUO NO LONGER DESERVES TO BE CALLED THE "ACE" OF THE NAKURU CLAN!
BECAUSE OF NOBUO, WE WERE NOT ABLE TO ASSASSINATE THE JOURNALIST!
KASHIRA!!
LET ALONE BE CHOSEN AS THE "ACE" OF THE CLAN.
NOBUO DOESN'T DESERVE TO LIVE...
WHAT'S MORE, HE REFUSED TO KILL THE YOUNG GIRL WHO SAW HIM AS A NINJA!

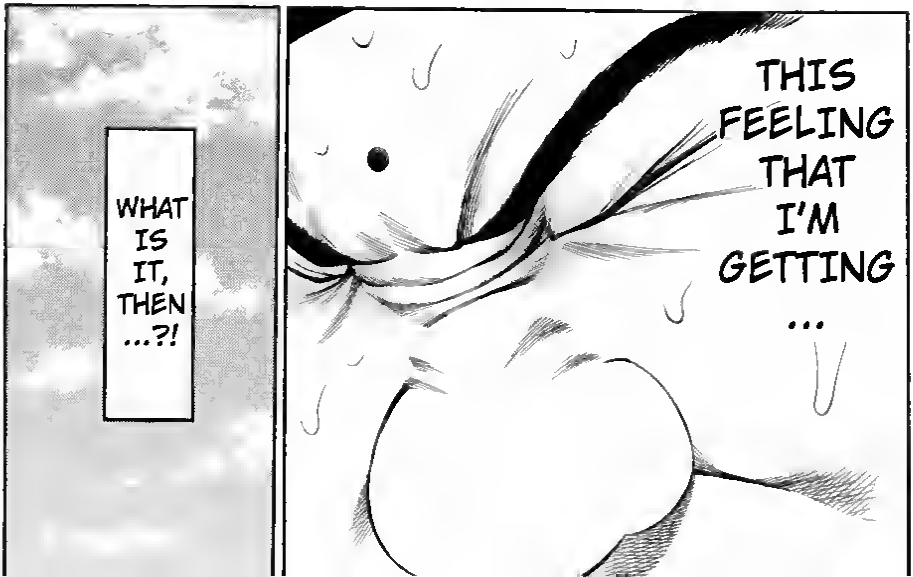
HE'S A COWARD NOW!
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU MUST FEEL...
HOWEVER, NOBUO MUST HAVE HIS OWN REASONS FOR MAKING THE DECISION THAT HE DID, THIS TIME.
HOLD ON, ONIMARU.
AND...
UNTIL NOW, NOBUO HAS SUPPORTED THE NAKURU CLAN BY COMPLETING EVERY ONE OF HIS TASKS FLAWLESSLY.
I AM GOING TO GIVE NOBUO ONE MORE CHANCE.
GO AND TAKE CARE OF THE TARGET, ONCE AND FOR ALL.
...INCLUDING THE LITTLE GIRL WHO SAW YOU, OF COURSE.
NOBUO...
HE MUST CARRY ON THE NEXT GENERATION OF NAKURU NINJAS WITH MY GRAND-DAUGHTER, MUSASHI, WHOM I HAVE BETROTHED TO HIM...

THERE WON'T BE A NEXT TIME, NOBUO...

SQUAWK!

NOBUO'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE.
HE LOOKS UNUSUAL, DOESN'T HE?
I HOPE IT ISN'T A BAD ILLNESS.

NO
...
IT'S
NOT
THAT
...
IT'S
NOT
THAT
AT
ALL
...


WHAT
IS
IT,
THEN
...?!
THIS
FEELING
THAT
I'M
GETTING
...

CHIRP! CHIRP!
CHIRP?
CHIRP!

OKAY... MAYBE... I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT...
I REALLY WANT YOU TO COME SEE ME PLAY! I'M THE BEST PLAYER ON THE TEAM! I'LL BE WEARING THE NUMBER 4 JERSEY!
THE GAME IS NEXT TUESDAY, YOU KNOW!
CHIRP

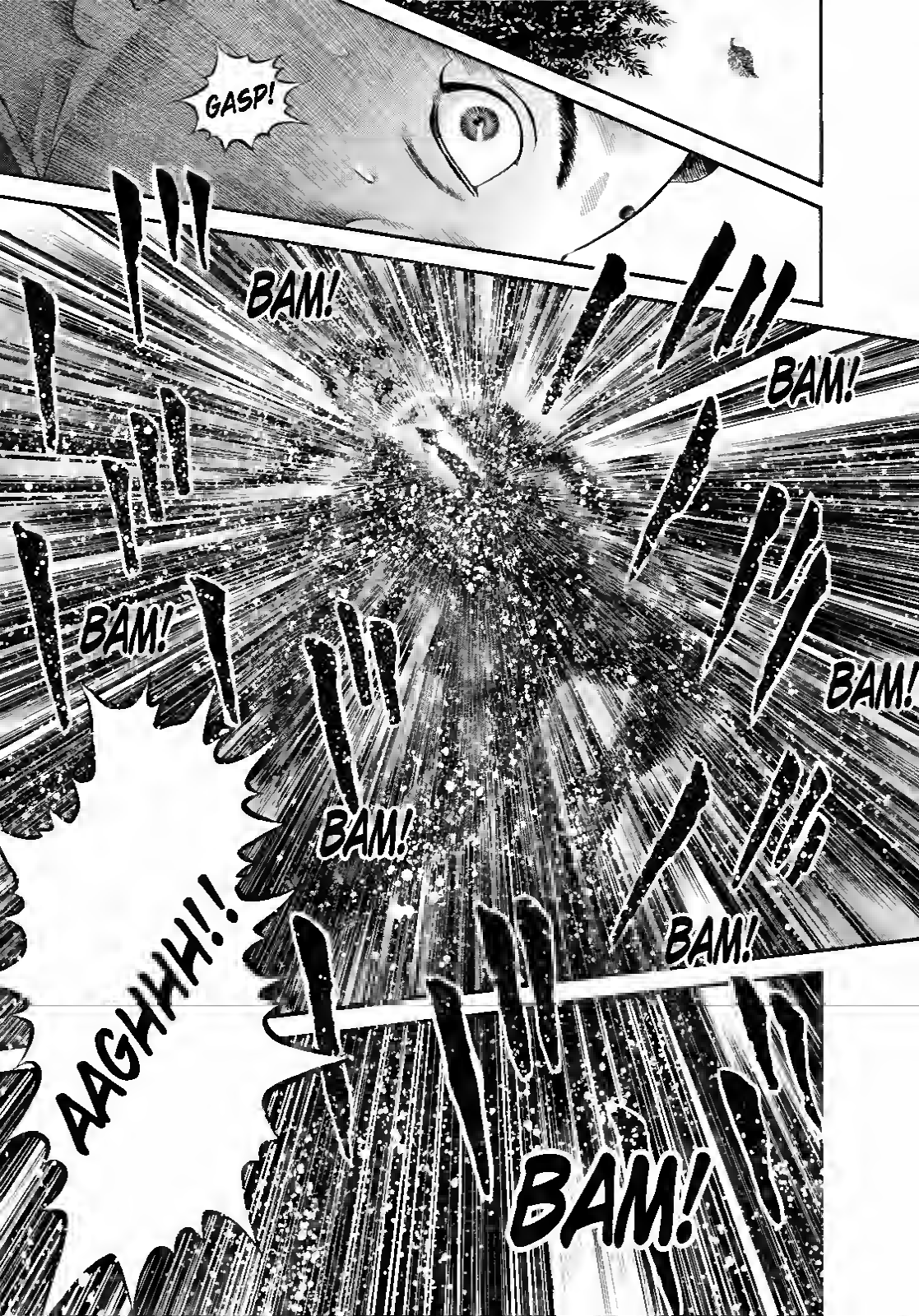
OH!
JUST TO BE CLEAR, I AM YOUR BOYFRIEND, RIGHT?
MAYBE?!
WHO'S HE...
HUH?
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
ペコ
BOW

TH-THANK YOU FOR THE OTHER DAY...
STUTTER.
AHEM.
HEY! YOU'RE THAT NINJA FROM THE OTHER DAY!
JUST ONE LOOK AT YOU AND IT ALL COMES BACK TO ME!
NI-NINJA?
WHAT NINJA, AYA?
IT'S NOTHING. YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME!
... AYA.

IT'S JUST... A SILLY THING FROM MY VILLAGE, BUT...
UH, NO... THIS, TOO...
RUSTLE RUSTLE
OH, MY! WERE YOU WAITING THIS WHOLE TIME JUST SO THAT YOU COULD RETURN MY UMBRELLA?!
UH... IF YOU TURN ITS HEAD, IT'LL START MAKING A SOUND.
I... I MADE IT...
WHAT A CUTE WOODEN DOLL!
HEY! IT EVEN HAS A MOLE! ☆
DON'T START ACCEPTING WOODEN DOLLS THAT LOOK LIKE SOME GUY YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW. IT'S CREEPY!
YOU DON'T KNOW THIS GUY.
AND IT'S WEIRD THAT A DOLL'S HEAD WOULD MAKE SOUNDS!
HUH? WHAT ?
AYA! STOP IT!
SNATCH

AYA, YOU'RE NICE TO ANYONE YOU MEET. IT'S TOO MUCH.
WHY, YUKI!
AND COUNTRY FOLK WILL JUST GET THE WRONG MESSAGE.
YOU MAY KEEP THE UMBRELLA, TOO.
SIR, THE ONLY THING WE WILL ACCEPT IS YOUR THANKS.

NICE... TO... ANYONE...?
WRONG... MESSAGE...?
A... AYA...
GU...
GU...


GASP!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
AAGHHH!!
BAM!

KEKEKE... EVADING WITH "HOT AIR", EH? LOOKS LIKE YOU STILL HAVE SOME SENSE IN YOU, NOBUO!
TODAY, I MADE SURE TO TIP THE NEEDLES WITH POISON!
NOBUO... YOU'VE DUG YOUR OWN GRAVE!
YOU'VE REVEALED TO SOMEONE FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD THAT YOU'RE A NINJA...
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS ...
THOSE TWO MUST BE KILLED...
YOU'VE BROKEN THE IRON LAW OF THE NAKURU CLAN!

YOU'VE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH A COMMON GIRL, NOBUO!

GO AHEAD AND LAUGH, ONIMARU!
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE... I HAVE FELT SOMETHING FOR ANOTHER PERSON!!
THE 27TH SHINOBI X END

FUMINORI YOSHIDA

鉄人企画 STAFF

CHIEF RYO OTSUKA

鉄人企画 STAFF

AI UDAGAWA

IS THIS ON PURPOSE?!
DOES HE WANT A FIGHT?!
ALL OF A SUDDEN, MARIO PAID A VISIT AT THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE APARTMENT.
MR. YAMADA VS MARIO
YAWN
HE'S CHECKING HIS FINGER.
IS HE GONNA KEEP THIS UP...?!
MARIO KICKS A BALL VIOLENTLY AGAINST THE 1ST FLOOR IRON DOOR.
MR. YAMADA IS A CARTOONIST FILLED WITH LOVE.
NINJA YAMADA BLAZES THRU THE MANGA WORLD!
SLAM
WITH HIS "FULL MOON FINGER"
SHUT UP!
YOU ASKED FOR IT!
YAMADA BREAKS INTO A TEACHER FROM THE WINDOW!
ONLY MARIO CAN'T WORK!
WORK HARD!
LOVE DOGS!
DRINK LOTS!
おわり
THE END
NO MORE!
YOU PICKED THE WRONG OFFICE TO BOTHER!
AND THEN SILENCE... BUT AFTER AWHILE, MARIO PAID ANOTHER VISIT!
ASSISTANT'S ROOM
THIS WORK PLACE IS...
SUCH A QUIET PLACE IN THE DAY!
(TWO FLOOR OFFICE)

KEITA HIRUMA

KIMINOBU JOZAN

NORIKO HIGASHINO